

Kṛṣṇa in Kannada Literature
with special reference to
Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa

by

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a. ABSTRACT,

Kṛṣṇa in Kannada literature with special reference to Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa: A brief synopsis.

Research work on the Kṛṣṇa theme is not new. It could be said that people have worked more on Kṛṣṇa than any other character in Indian religion. The origin of the Kṛṣṇa legend itself is a much discussed subject. Many scholars have convincingly argued that the origin of the later Kṛṣṇa theme has its roots in the Vedas, and have furnished suitable examples. And it is said that the Viṣṇu of the Vedic period led to the formation of the Vaiṣṇava cult which later became famous by the name Bhāgavata cult. The theory of Avatāra, the personality of Kṛṣṇa in the Mahābhārata in the later Purāṇas and, the many attributes he was given in these all show some resemblance to the character of the Vedic Viṣṇu. Thus Kṛṣṇa was considered the incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu, and the Bhagavadgītā played a major part in this regard. Since then the Bhakti cult has grown and developed up to this day. This Bhakti, or devotion, spread its wings and embraced the whole of India. Thus today we see Kṛṣṇa-Bhakti-Kāvyas in all Indian languages. The present thesis which mainly deals with Kṛṣṇa in Kannada literature, with special reference to Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa, is the continuation of the Kṛṣṇabhakti movement which started long before Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa. A modest effort is made here to give a critical and objective view on this subject.

The thesis includes the origin of Kṛṣṇabhakti, its history, development from the Vedic Viṣṇuism up to the Bhāgavatapurāṇa; Kṛṣṇabhakti literature in the South in Karnataka, its development, its growth under the great Vaiṣṇavas like Rāmānuja, Madhva and

other saints, the influence of Śivaśaraṇas, the Haridāsa movement, Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa, their vision of Bālakṛṣṇa and Bālakṛṣṇa as seen by some later Haridāsas: A few Vaiṣṇava votaries other than the Haridāsas are also included as they also have some important points in their composition with regard to Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇabhakti. The source materials are to be found in the School of Oriental and African Studies, London University; The British Library ; The India Office Library and Records; and from the author's own collections. Here and there are included certain points that came out during the discussions the author had with eminent scholars in India during his field-work tour.

Important points which have been brought out by the dāsas as seen by the author:

- I. Using little Kṛṣṇa to bind people with love and thus creating social harmony.
- II. The diversity of ideas of the playfulness of Kṛṣṇa which has not been dealt with in such detail in the original texts.
- III. Extensive information concerning the culture and customs of the relevant area (Karnataka) which found expression in the poems of the dasas which brought Kṛṣṇa closer to the hearts of the local people as he came to them like one of their family.
- IV. Contribution to the Kannada speaking land^{of} literature of their own, particularly aimed at the welfare of common folk. This helped to bring home the ideas of the ancient Sanskrit texts and highly sanskritised Kannada works to common people, which until then had belonged mainly to the pandits.
- V. Creating an awareness of music and the part it can play in bringing people together.

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d. Notes on Transliteration

a, ā, i, ī, u, ū, ṛ, ṝ, ě, e, ai, ö, o, au, ṁ, n, ḥ, ḥ
k, kh, g, gh, ṅ
c, ch, j, jh, ṇ
ṭ, ṭh, ḍ, ḍh, ṇ
t, th, d, dh, n
p, ph, b, bn, m
y, r, l, v, ś, ṣ, s, h, ḷ, ḷ, ṛ, ṇ

The above transliteration is a combination embodying the requirements of Sanskrit, Kannada and Tamil. There are a few different transliterations used (these are underlined) like 'ě', 'ö' which correspond to the Kannada and Tamil short vowels 'ಎ' 'ಇ' and 'ಓ' 'ಔ' and 'ḥ', 'ḷ', 'ṛ', 'ṇ' correspond to Tamil 'ஹ' 'ழ' 'ர' 'ண' respectively. 'ṁ', 'n' which are double underlined correspond to anusvāra 'ṁ' in Kannada where all nasal sounds like 'ṅ', 'ṇ', 'ṇ', 'n', 'm' are represented with anusvāra 'ṁ'. But in the transliteration only anusvāras that come before the 'p', 'ph', 'b', 'bh', and 'ś', 'ṣ', 's' are represented by 'ṁ' and all other anusvāras by 'n' for this is better suited than 'ṁ'.

No diacriticals are used for language names, names of States/region/well-known towns.

There is no underlining for generic terms like Vedas, Upaniṣads, Purāṇas.

The word Bhakti is usually underlined, and words like mantra, karma, jñāna are underlined the first few times, and also when they appear after a long interval. Words borrowed from Kannada are underlined. All Sanskrit verses and parts thereof are underlined.

There is no underlining for words given in English guise like Rgvedic, Upanisadic, Puranic and the like. But these and the generic terms which are referred to above all start with capitals.

All these rules may be broken in giving quotations (where the orthography of the original is adhered to).

e. Abbreviations used

A.V.	Atha rvaveda
Ai.B.	Aitareyabrāhmaṇa
B.G.	Bhagavadgītā
B.H.P.	Bhāgavatapurāṇa
Br.U.	Brhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣat
Ch.U.	Chāndogyopaniṣat
H.V.	Harivaṃśa
K.U.	Kaṭhopaniṣat
M.B.H.	Mahābhārata
Mai.U.	Maitrī-Upaniṣat
MBh.T.N.	Mahābhārata-Tātparya-Nirṇaya
Mh.N.U.	Mahānārāyaṇa-Upaniṣat
N.B.H.	Nārada bhaktisūtra
R.V.	R̥gveda
S.B.H.	Śāṇḍilya bhaktisūtra
S.P.B.	Śatapatha brāhmaṇa
Sv.U.	Śvetāśvatara-Upaniṣat
Tai.A.	Taittirīyāraṇyaka
Tai.B.	Taittirīyabrāhmaṇa
Tai.S.	Taittirīyasamhitā
Tai.U.	Taittirīya-Upaniṣat
V.P.	Viṣṇupurāṇa
Y.V.	Yajurveda

1. PREFACE:

Kṛṣṇa is an aspect of the supreme deity for Hindus in general. He is the incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu who is the principal subject in a number of Upanisads and other post-Vedic writings. He was the one who befriended the Pāṇḍavas and took them to victory against the Kauravas. He preached to Arjuna the essence of righteousness, morality, conduct, discipline and all that is dharma, in the form of the Bhagavadgītā. He was love incarnate. Kṛṣṇa is first the adored child, with all the waywardness of a child. Yet this child became, in manhood, the philosophical counsellor of Arjuna.

He is the highest God, the ruler of the universe, the bestower of good and the destroyer of evil to those who are his humble Bhaktas. For some, he is an ideal human being in every respect, the very personification of perfection, but not God. He is the one who achieved Ātmasākṣātkāra (self-realisation), and preached the same to his fellow beings, according to Jñānis. For others who view him from a different angle he is the great lover. Kṛṣṇa indeed had a diverse personality which was possessed by only a few in the world, and this diversity in his character made his life a source for many discussions.

Though aware of the extent of the writing upon the subject of Kṛṣṇa, one feels that the Kannada sources for devotion to him have been, to some extent, ignored. It may be that the volume of literature in Kannada on Kṛṣṇa is small when compared to that of some other Indian languages, like Hindi, Bengali and Braj. However, the Kṛṣṇa theme handled by the Haridāsas of Karnataka calls for comment and discussion.

So compelling is the image of Kṛṣṇa conjured up by these devotees, that it is difficult not to become oneself emotionally involved with one's subject-matter. It is the childhood of God,

his mischief and play, that are the emotive topics so beloved of the devotee, for his involvement with his Lord is emotional, not academic and philosophical. Their approach to God is an intuitive one, not one of involvement in philosophical minutiae and niceties that blunt the sheer power of their attachment to God. At the same time, the pranks of the child Kṛṣṇa themselves, afford room for discussion.

Kṛṣṇa in the songs of Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa is very different from the wise counsellor of the Bhagavadgītā, and even from the idea of God as portrayed in the Bhāgavatapurāṇa. This latter work is to a large extent the source for many of the popular medieval traditions regarding Kṛṣṇa embodied in the writings of the Haridāśas. The discussion in the present study would support this argument.

Having examined the major portions of these two devotees' works it may be suggested that the Kṛṣṇa they portray is more active, naughty and attractive than the Kṛṣṇa of the Bhāgavatapurāṇa. It is possible that this vividness arises at least in part from the fact of the songs being in a regional language, Kannada, which is the language of the common folk, rather than in the Sanskrit of the Bhāgavatapurāṇa a language of the learned few. Their appeal is more direct.

In the Bhagavadgītā Arjuna says to Kṛṣṇa, "Thou art the Supreme Brahman, the Supreme Abode and the Supreme Purifier, the Eternal, Divine person, the First of the Gods, the Unborn, the All-pervading" (1). He is also addressed as Viṣṇu in certain other

1) param brahma param dhāma pavitraṁ paramaṁ bhavān /
puruṣaṁ śāśvataṁ divyaṁ ādidevaṁ ajaṁ vibhum //
āhustvām ṛṣayassarve devasīrnāradastathā /
asito devalo vyāsaḥ svayaṁ caiva bravīṣi me //
sarvametat ṛtam manye yanmām vadasi keśava /
nahi te bhagavan vyaktiṁ vidurdevā na dānavāḥ // B.G. 10-12,13 & 14.

contexts (2). In other occasions he has been addressed as Kṛṣṇa (3), Madhusūdana (4), Mahābāhu (5) - giving him names in terms of his achievements or as attributes to his personality. Even in the verse quoted above Arjuna says that 'you are the Supreme Brahman, you are the Supreme Abode thus say the sages, Nārada and others, and as well as you have said this to me', and at the end Arjuna agrees that all this is true. It appears that Arjuna had some doubt at the beginning as to whether Kṛṣṇa was the Supreme Brahman or not. Later he realises He is the Supreme Brahman and calls him by the same adjective. Thus a study of the Bhagavadgītā as Kṛṣṇa's teachings and comparing these with the life that Kṛṣṇa lived would reveal the truth that Kṛṣṇa is the Parabrahman and Kṛṣṇa is Viṣṇu. One more point to support this is that in the Rgveda Viṣṇu is praised as such a deity who is spread everywhere. There is no place where there is no Viṣṇu (6). The same Rgveda states that the highest abode, ie. the third step (7) of Viṣṇu could be achieved only through constant meditation, that too by great men only (8). All these make way for one to connect and compare Viṣṇu with Parabrahman. Parabrahman, the Eternal soul, is everywhere in the form of individual souls. These individual souls can realise that there is a highest soul of which they are parts, only when māyā (illusion) is overcome, and this is possible through constant thinking and meditation. If one now examines these two above said principles there is hardly any difference left and one can say that Viṣṇu is Parabrahman, otherwise called Kṛṣṇa, Acyuta, Madhusūdana and by

2) B.G. XI - 30

3) B.G. VI - 34

4) B.G. I - 35

5) B.G. XI - 23

6) idaṃ viṣṇurvikrame tredhā nidadhe padam / R.V. I -22-17

^{the all pervading}
"This whole universe, Viṣṇu measured by his three strides".

7) This may anticipate the story of Vāmanāvatāra.

8) yasya trī pūrṇā madhunā padānyakṣīyamāṇā svadhayā madanti/

tadviṣṇoḥ paramaṃ padam sadā paśyanti sūrayaḥ / R.V. I-154-4

R.V. I-22-20

many other names in the Bhagavadgītā and elsewhere in the Mahābhārata.

It is self-evident in most of the post-Vedic works that, for their authors, the Viṣṇu of the Vedic hymns, was to be identified with Parabrahman. But the same understanding did not continue long, for the language was not that easy for the later generations to grasp the inner meaning. So came the Upaniṣads which dealt with the teachings of the highest truth, the Parabrahman, a principle developed around Viṣṇu in simpler language and exact definition. This left very little doubt regarding its implications. But even the Upaniṣads were hard to digest, for their obsolete language was also felt to be difficult. By the time of the Mahābhārata, the truths enshrined in the Upaniṣads were presented in a simpler way in the Bhagavadgītā, a portion of that great work. It is here that Kṛṣṇa directly tells Arjuna (and us) that he is the Parabrahman.

At the beginning Arjuna called Kṛṣṇa by several names such as Madhusūdana, Vāsudeva, Jagannātha etc. Then he gradually switches to stronger terms and finally calls him Parabrahman. This clearly reveals the mental phases that Arjuna underwent and how he accepted the Parabrahmatva (supremacy) of Kṛṣṇa. This provides a strong point in favour of saying that Kṛṣṇa was a complete incarnation of Viṣṇu, unlike his other incarnations such as Narasiṃha, Vāmana etc.

After all it is the language-medium in its broader sense that reveals the principle lying behind a civilization. As time passes, language changes, old concepts take new shapes to make themselves understood by changing society. But truth remains the same. That is what has happened to the Parabrahmatattva. During medieval times Vedic diction was not understood by the majority

in society and the same was the case at the time of the Mahābhārata, when even Upanisadic Sanskrit was found to be difficult. Thus gradually the literature grew in strength. This Vedic, and post Vedic Sanskrit literature, became a source of inspiration to the later generation. Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa were two wandering minstrels from Karnataka who chose certain of these sources for their songs among which the theme of Bālakṛṣṇa is also one. As these devotees have a long and rich background, one cannot ignore this and study their songs. Having all this in mind here is given an account of the Bālakṛṣṇa songs by these two famous dāsas with a short background about Viṣṇu and his rise to supremacy, and about Bhakti and its importance.

2. INTRODUCTION.

Kṛṣṇa-Bhakti - Devotion to Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇa-Bhakti has been known to Indians for the past several centuries. It started in North India in a tiny village Gokula - Br̥ndāvana and gradually spread and embraced the whole of India. Though Kṛṣṇa was born and bred in the north, his influence on the people was first seen clearly in the South (1). The Ālvār of the Tamil land were the first devotees to sing the glory of the Lord (2). This might be due to the fact that the north of India was under constant attack by invaders through the North Western Himalayan passes.

It is quite interesting to trace how Kṛṣṇa-Bhakti spread to Karnataka. Rāmānuja, who lived in the Tamil land and who was influenced by the Kṛṣṇa-Bhakti of the Ālvār, had to leave his motherland for sectarian reasons. He was welcomed by the people of Karnataka and there he spread Kṛṣṇa Bhakti which had suffered under the rule of Jaina Kings (during the 12th.C. A.D.). A little later in the 13th.C. A.D. Madhvācārya appeared on the scene and established the stronghold of Kṛṣṇa-Bhakti throughout the State.

The concept of Bhakti differs between Rāmānuja and Madhva for their philosophies are different. But both of them agree that Viṣṇu is the Supreme Lord and that Bhakti is the means of reaching him.

Mission and Minstrels.

Madhva's words and works carried simple ideas easily grasped by the common people and so they became very popular in a very short time. Soon he had many followers ready to spread the supremacy

-
- 1) utpannā drāviḍe sāhaṃ vṛddhiṃ karnāṭake gatā - Padmapurāṇa
"I was born in the Drāviḍa country and
grew in Karnataka". (as spoken by Bhakti to the sage Narada)
Uttarakhaṇḍa I-48a
 - 2) Of course reference to Kṛṣṇa are found in a few paripāṭal songs that came before the Ālvār movement.

of Lord Hari (Viṣṇu), Narisarvottamattva . They considered Viṣṇu the Lord of Lords, and none beside him. To them, all other deities came after Him (3).

This message was passed by Madhva to his disciples and it continued till recent days. Among those there were people who sang and spread the glory of Hari in Sanskrit as well as in the local language, Kannada. These devotees are called Haridāśas in general of whom Purandaradāśa and Kanakadāśa are very prominent. Their main purpose in life was to spread this philosophy and message of their master Madhva. But all of them did not just stick merely to this. They did much more. Haridāśas were great social reformers as well.

The present thesis mainly deals with the subject of Bāla-kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa-Bhakti depicted in the works of Purandaradāśa and that of his contemporary Kanakadāśa in particular, and the place of Kṛṣṇa-Bhakti in the whole of the Haridāśa and Kannada literature in general is discussed. As these Haridāśas were the followers of Madhva, and of Lord Viṣṇu who was ^{their} favourite deity, a short account of Viṣṇu in this chapter will not be out of context. Here a relevant study of how Viṣṇu has been treated in the early portions of the R̥gveda, how his personality gradually grew from strength to strength as Vedic literature grew and also how this has influenced the post Vedic literature, has been made. As the topic progresses, further necessary extracts are given to show the similarity of Viṣṇu in the Vedas and the Upaniṣads, and Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa in the Epics and Purāṇas.

3) śrīmanmadhvamate hariḥ parataraḥ.

According to the doctrine of Madhva Lord Hari is the Supreme.

(This is a portion of a popular verse attributed to Śrī Vyāsarāya.)

3. VIṢṆU IN THE VEDAS.

The Many and the one.

indram mitram varuṇamagnimāhuratho divyaḥ
sa suparṇo garutmān /
ekaṃ sadviprā bahudhā vadanty-
agnim yamaṃ mātariśvānamāhuḥ // (4)

"Him the sages call Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, Agni. He is the divine kite with lovely wings. Those who are well-versed in the scriptures name the one existent differently as fire, death and vital air".

By this hymn it is understood that all gods are equal. As hundreds of activities take place in nature, it seems, people have connected a particular deity to a particular action at that time. This resulted in the formation of several deities. In ^{the} course of time the same people have found it difficult to attach themselves to several deities, and in order to suit their purpose have attributed all the different powers to their iṣṭadevatā (chosen form of God). Viṣṇu may be given as one of the examples of such chosen deities. If one God could be called by different names according to the circumstances and actions he performs - various functions linked to different deities, or various attributes by which different deities are recognised, could as well be assigned to one single deity (5).

4) R.V. I-164-46.

5) In the above hymn Monier-Williams translates the word 'Garutmān' as a heavenly bird or the sun. Sāyaṇa says that it is the bird by that name. Garutvat also means the sun God. This connects the relationship of Viṣṇu and Sūrya for in the post-Vedic literature, especially during the purāṇic times, Garuḍa is the vehicle of Lord Viṣṇu (the Bhagavadgītā also throws some light on the view that Viṣṇu is a solar deity by saying ādityānāmahaṃ viṣṇuḥ). This view is put forth on the fact that Viṣṇu measures the whole world by his three steps; this has lent itself to many interpretations, of which that relating to the sun's movement is also one, where Sūrya is described as Cakrāyudha (Disc weaponed). This gives a clue as to his relationship with Viṣṇu, one of whose weapons is the Disc.

In the earlier sections of the Rgveda more prominence is given to deities such as Indra, Agni, Vāyu, Sūrya and others. Viṣṇu is also praised, but the number of hymns addressed to him is much smaller (6). But in the later Vedic period of the Brāhmaṇas and in the Yajurveda Viṣṇu acquired such a great position that he surpassed all other deities. The reason for this could be sought in the hymns addressed to Viṣṇu -

idaṃ viṣṇur vicakrame tredhā nidadhe padam
samūlhamasya pāṃsure / (7)

"Viṣṇu (the all pervading one) measured the whole world by his three strides. The whole world was covered by the dust raised due to his steps".

trīṇi padā vi cakrame viṣṇur gopā adābhyah
ato dharmāṇi dhārayan / (8)

"Nobody can cause trouble ^{to} him. He is the protector (of the Universe). So, supporting Dharma, he took his three strides".

viṣṇoḥ karmāṇi paśyata yato vratāni paspaśe / (9)

"Look at the wonderful deeds of Viṣṇu, by whose grace only the priests are capable of performing sacrifices.

dve idasya kramāṇe swardṛśo'bhikhyāya martyo bhuraṇyati /
trīyamasya nakirā dadharṣati vayaścana patayantaḥ patatrinah // (10)

"Mortal men can know about his first two steps by ^rpaying to Him, but the third step which is placed in the heavens could not be understood by any human being and even the maruts and birds which can move everywhere cannot understand his third step".

6) More than 160 Ṛks are addressed to Indra, more than 115 to Agni and more than 15 to Sūrya whereas Viṣṇu has been invoked only in some six hymns.

7) R.V. I - 22-17. This anticipates the Vāmanāvatāra of Viṣṇu.

8) R.V. I - 22-18. This might echo the famous lines of the Gītā - yadā yadā hi dharmasya glanirbhavati bhārata B.G. IV - 7 & 8.

9) R.V. I - 22-19.

10) R.V. I - 155-5.

Viṣṇu and Sacrifice.

The above-quoted hymns from the early portions of the Rgveda give an idea of the status of Viṣṇu among the Vedic deities. The reason that he was the deity of the sacrifice could have affected the prominence of Viṣṇu in the later periods (during the Brāhmaṇas and Āraṇyakas) since Karma Kāṇḍa (section on sacrifice) was prominent then. Some of the scholars like R.G. Bhandarkar and M.P. Pandit suppose that Viṣṇu's taking of these strides - the first two within the reach of human beings and the third, unknowable in the heaven, may be the reason for Viṣṇu's subsequent prominence. His third stride which looks more prominent than the other two manifests its impact on the further evolution of ideas assigning more importance to Viṣṇu. The Rgveda once again has the hymn:

tadviṣṇoḥ paramaṃ padaṃ sadā paśyanti sūrayaḥ /
divīva cakṣurātataṃ / (11)

"As the vision fixed towards the sky apprehends its infinitude, so the Rsis with gifted insight, always look at the endless blessed status of Viṣṇu".

The Benevolence.

The Viṣṇu sūktas of the first maṇḍala of the Rgveda may throw light upon Viṣṇu's benevolent nature and his love for the devotees, which are well known in the post-Vedic^{scriptures} such as the Ēpics and Purāṇas.

yasya tñ pūrṇā madhunā padānyakṣīyamāṇā
svadhayā madanti / (12)

"The three strides of Viṣṇu which are sweet and filled with nectar, and which are indestructible, delight those who pray to him".

tadasya priyamabhi pāto aśyāṃ naro yatra devayavo madanti /
urukramasya sa hi bandhuritthā
viṣṇoḥ pade parame madhva utsaḥ // (13)

11) R.V. I-22-20

12) R.V. I-154-4a.

13) R.V. I-154-5.

"Let me also attain such an abode of Viṣṇu where is the sweet spring of happiness and where those who try to obtain the blessings of Viṣṇu experience happiness. Thus, by bringing joy, Viṣṇu is affectionate to his devotees" (14).

The hymn yuvākumāraḥ pratyetyāhavam (15) " young but not a child, Viṣṇu comes to the sacrifice" (having heard our requests) - speaks as to the character of Lord Viṣṇu and shows that he was very active among gods. This may have some significance considering Viṣṇu's popularity in the post-Vedic period.

Associative States.

Viṣṇu's friendship with the Rgvedic Indra is a well known fact (16), and on different occasions it seems as if Indra had recognised the greatness of Viṣṇu and had sought his help.

athābraviḍvṛtramindro haniṣyantsakhe
viṣṇo vitarāṃ vī kramasva / (17)

"While killing Vṛtra Indra said 'Dear friend Viṣṇu stride vastly'." Here it appears as if Indra wanted Viṣṇu to display his strength; a useful point, which perhaps confirms the later dominance of Viṣṇu. There are certain hymns which expressly state Viṣṇu's supremacy over other deities. These are worth noting as the words used in them to define the particular action are very strong. (18).

14) The statement 'madhva utsaḥ' appears to be very prominent and powerful. "There is always a stream of honey in the abode of Visnu". This invariably accounts for the love of Viṣṇu for others. Naturally people lose themselves to this simplicity and affection of Viṣṇu and become his admirers. The extension of the same idea may be seen in the life of Kṛṣṇa, particularly in his boyhood days.

15) R.V. I-155-6

16) indrasya yujyaḥ sakhā ; close friend of Indra. RV. I-22-19

17) R.V. IV-18-11

18) The following explanations are drawn from slightly later portions of the Vedas.

agnir^{vai} devānāmavamaḥ viṣṇuḥ paramaḥ
tadantareṇa sarvā devatāḥ /

(19)

"Agni is the lowest and Viṣṇu is the highest among the Gods (present among men) and other Gods come in between these two".

Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa declares

tasmādāhur viṣṇurdevānām śreṣṭhaḥ iti /

(20)

"So they said that Viṣṇu is the best among the Gods". (21)

na te viṣṇo jāyamāno na jāto deva mahimnaḥ
paramantamāpa /

(22)

"Those who are to be born and who have already been born will not attain the supremacy of Viṣṇu's glory".

viṣṇuḥ sukrte sukrṭtaraḥ /

(23)

"Viṣṇu is the foremost among the beneficent Gods".

These statements by the Vedic seers should have some significance: Otherwise Viṣṇu's rise to such a great level in the later sections of the Vedas (i.e. the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads) is very difficult to account for. Here one or two points regarding Viṣṇu and sacrifice need to be mentioned. The Rgveda says 'viṣṇur vai yajñah' (24) "Viṣṇu verily is the sacrifice"; Similarly other mantras such as yato vratāni paspaśe (25), yo vai viṣṇuḥ sa yajñah (26) sa u eva makhaḥ sa viṣṇuḥ (27); and many more hymns clearly say that Viṣṇu is sacrifice. As the Brāhmaṇa chapters of the Vedas contained more information about rituals and they dealt prominently

19) Ai.B. I-1-1

20) S.P.B. XIV-1-1-5

21) There was a sacrificial session among gods and all of them wanted to attain magnificence. They all decided among themselves that he who reached the end of the sacrifice first would attain it. Viṣṇu reached it first so he is the greatest among gods. S.P.B. XIV-1-1-4

22) R.V. VII-99-2

23) R.V. I-156-5

24) Ai.B. I-3-4

25) R.V. I-22-19

26) S.P.B. V-2-3-6

27) S.P.B. XIV-1-1-13

with sacrifices and other such ritualistic subjects, and as Viṣṇu has been identified with sacrifice his importance along with the sacrifices must have increased.

Viṣṇu and Prajāpati.

One more reason for Viṣṇu's rise to supremacy may be due to his identification with Prajāpati in the later Vedic literature. A short account of Viṣṇu and Prajāpati is worth noting. Prajāpati is a very powerful God in the later part of the Vedas.

yo deveśvadhi deva eka āsīt / (28)

"Prajāpati is the God of Gods and none beside him".

prājapate na tvadetānyanyo viśvā jātāni pari tā babhūva /
yatkāmāste juhumastanno astu / (29)

"Prajāpati, Thou only know, understand all these created things and none besides you. Grant us our hearts' desire when we invoke you". These ṛks are very similar to those on Lord Viṣṇu quoted previously (30). This Prajāpati seems to be the same as the Virat Puruṣa of the Puruṣasūkta (31). Prajāpati is invoked as the one supreme Lord over all others in the 10th book of Ṛgveda. Here, he is addressed as 'deva ekaḥ' (32).

The lines in the Puruṣasūkta hymn sa bhūmim viśvato vṛtvā aty^atiṣṭhaddaśāṅgulam (33) "He having surrounded earth from all the sides - stood on its top" are similar to that of the opening line of the Viṣṇusūkta which start with idaṃ viṣṇurvi cakrame tredhā ṇi dadhe padam (34) "Viṣṇu measured this whole universe with his

28) R.V. X-121-8

29) R.V. X-121-10

30) R.V. VII-99-2; R.V. I-156-5

31) cf R.V. X-90-1

32) R.V. X-81-3;

33) R.V. X-90-1b

34) R.V. I-22-17

three strides". We have statements like viṣṇurvai yajñah (35) yajño vai prajāpatiḥ (36). "Viṣṇu verily is sacrifice". "Prajāpati verily is sacrifice". These speak for the apparent close relationship of Viṣṇu and Prajāpati.

Here a short note on the different forms which Prajāpati assumed during the Vedic period would be useful. The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa has an account of Prajāpati taking the form of a tortoise (37) as well as that of a boar (38). This along with the three strides that Viṣṇu took to measure the Universe, positively supplemented the development of Viṣṇu's ten incarnations as Kūrma, Varāha and Vāmana in the Epic and Purāṇic period. It is Prajāpati, not Viṣṇu who appeared in the form of a tortoise and a boar in the aforesaid instances. All these, to a certain extent, point to the identification that became clearer during the post-Vedic period (39) i.e. the Epic and Purāṇic time. Prajāpati literally means the Lord of people and Viṣṇu is also the Lord who loves people, his devotees, and later he is famous as the preserver among the trinity. This also adds to the identical character of Viṣṇu and Prajāpati. J.Gonda while discussing Viṣṇu and Rudra writes; "His (Viṣṇu's) relations or community of interests, with Prajapati, which date already from Rgvedic times, are intensified" (40).

These illustrations, even though few in number, are indicative of the supremacy of Viṣṇu over other deities felt by that time (post Rgvedic time). Sri Aurobindo states; "..... the importance of Gods

35) At.B. I-3-4

36) Tai.B. I-3-10-10; III-7-2-1

37) S.P.B. VI-1-1-12

38) S.P.B. XIV-1-2-11

39) As already mentioned, during Vedic times there was not much difference between gods. Whenever a particular deity was invoked he was given the greatest power. But still a keen observation reveals^{that} there were certain attributes that were special to certain deities. Some of them had much in common with one another. This is probably the reason why Prajāpati and Viṣṇu came so close to each other.

40) J. Gonda, Visnuism and Sivaism: a comparison - p.11.

are not to be measured by the number of the hymns devoted to them or by the extent to which they are invoked in the thoughts of the Rishis, but by the functions which they perform. Agni and Indra to whom the majority of the Vedic hymns are addressed are not greater than Visnu and Rudra, but ^{the} functions they fulfil in the internal and external world were ^{the} most active, dominant, directly affective for the psychological discipline of the ancient mystics. This alone is the reason for the predominance" (41).

Kapali Sastri adds this; "the Rsis invoke the powers of Agni and Indra because they are of constant and immediate consequence in the psychological and spiritual discipline of these mystics, and hence the importance and not because they are superior to Sun." "The same may be said of Vishnu and Rudra to whom lesser number of hymns are devoted and yet Indra and Agni are not greater than they" (42). Gonda adds further "..... it is quite true that many phases in the long process of Viṣṇu's rise to the highest position have completely disappeared from our sight" (43).

Viṣṇu in the major Upaniṣads.

The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad is the first among the early Upaniṣads to mention Viṣṇu's name thus: viṣṇur yoniṃ kalpayatu (44) "let Viṣṇu protect the womb", This has a prominent role to play in Viṣṇu's development, for yoni in a way controls the life of this world. It has some relation to a similar statement in the Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad prajāpatiṣcarati garbhe antaḥ (45), "Prajāpati moves inside the womb" - again implying the close relationship between Viṣṇu and Prajāpati.

41) As quoted by M.P. Pandit in the book Aditi and other deities, P.164.

42) As quoted by M.P. Pandit in the book Aditi and other deities, P.165.

43) J. Gonda, Visnuism and Sivaism a comparison - p.12.

44) Br.U. VI-4-21

45) Mh.N.U. I-1

Though most of the Upaniṣads are devoted to philosophical speculations, as stated above, here and there some passing references to Viṣṇu may be found. The Kāthopaniṣad has repeated the line of the Viṣṇu Sūkta 'tad viṣṇoḥ paramaṃ padam' (46) and again the Maitrī Upaniṣad (47) has 'yajño viṣṇuḥ prajāpatiḥ' (48) where the word Viṣṇu appears prominently.

The name Nārāyaṇa may now be considered. This word is a synonym of Viṣṇu. Nārāyaṇa appears first in the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka. There it is said nārāyaṇa param brahma (49) "Nārāyaṇa is Parabrahman". The Maitrī Upaniṣad moving on the same line states eṣa hi khalu ātmā nārāyaṇaḥ (50) "This soul is Nārāyaṇa" and going through the Upaniṣads composed a little later, one sees how Viṣṇu and Nārāyaṇa have been identified. The verse -

nārāyaṇāya vidmahe vāsudevāya dhīmahi /
tanno viṣṇuḥ pracodayāt // (51)

from the Mahānārāyaṇa-Upaniṣad not only throws some light on the Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa identity but also on the Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa identity (52). Further the same Upaniṣad has the lines -

nārāyaṇaḥ paro jyotiḥ ātmā nārāyaṇaḥ paraḥ /
nārāyaṇa param brahmā tattvaṃ nārāyaṇaḥ paraḥ // (53)

which clearly declare that Nārāyaṇa is the source of light, he is the inner soul, and he is the highest principle as well as the Supreme Self; A little further in the 20th chapter, the Upaniṣad has trīṇi padā vicakrame viṣṇuḥ (54) reminding one of the three strides that Lord Viṣṇu took to measure the universe.

46) K.U. III-9

47) This is a later Upaniṣad (approx. 4-3C. B.C.)

48) Mai.U. VI-16

49) Tai.Ā. X-11-1

50) Mai.U. VI-8 and VII-7

51) Mh.N.U. III-16

52) Vāsudeva a synonym for Kṛṣṇa during the Ēpic and post-Ēpic period.

53) Mh.N.U. XI-4

54) Mh.N.U. XX-14.

Thus, though there are very few references to the name or activities of Lord Viṣṇu in the principal Upaniṣads, as the Upaniṣadic literature grew in strength (55) Viṣṇu has evolved into a main object of worship. The one that has been described in many ways in these Upaniṣads has been identified, by the devotees of Lord Viṣṇu, with Lord Viṣṇu himself.

Viṣṇu in the Mahābhārata.

The first reference to the name Viṣṇu in the Mahābhārata is found in a benedictory verse (56). And as one reads further one comes across many more references. Only a few are taken to show how the Vedic Viṣṇu appears in the Epic. Lines that echo the theme of the Rgvedic Viṣṇu are given below.

viṣṇuṃ avyaktaśamsthānaṃ viśante devasattamam / (57)

"They attain Viṣṇu whose abode remains unknown and who is the foremost among all gods".

There is a reference to Viṣṇu's three strides in the lines.

ūcuśca sarve deveśaṃ viṣṇuṃ vrtrabhayārditāḥ /
tvayālokāstrayaḥ krāntāstribhīrvikramaṇaiḥ prabho // (58)

"All the gods who were frightened by the demon Vṛtra spoke to Viṣṇu, the Lord of Gods; 'Our Lord, all the three worlds have been measured by you by your three strides'."

In the same chapter, Vyāsa gives an explanation to the name Viṣṇu and its synonyms:

viṣṇur vikramaṇādeva jayanāñjīṣṇurucyate /
śāśvatatvādanantaśca govindo vedanādgavām // (59)

55) Though many of the Vaiṣṇava-Upaniṣads are of much later date than that of the Gītā, there are certain Upaniṣads, like Maitrī and Mahā-nārāyaṇa that traditional people think to be older than ^{the} Mahābhārata.

56) M.B.H. I-1-22 - please see page 34, foot note 2.

57) M.B.H. XII-206-2

58) M.B.H. V-10-6

59) M.B.H. V -68-13

"He is known as Viṣṇu for he strode over the worlds,
He is Jiṣṇu, as he always ^{is} victorious. He is called Ananta,
endless, as he is eternal, and he can feel the cows and under-
stand their feelings, and so he is called Govinda".

These are only a few examples to show how the Vedic Viṣṇu has influenced the Epic literature, and this gives an idea of how powerful a god Viṣṇu evolved into by the time the Epics came into being. This is just a passing reference to his greatness and more is to come after his identification with Kṛṣṇa (60).

The identification of Viṣṇu and Kṛṣṇa.

As has been seen already in the R̥gveda there are certain clues as to some of the incarnations of Lord Viṣṇu in the Epic and Purāṇic periods. Later the same god has been identified with Kṛṣṇa. The point is clarified in the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka in a verse which runs thus -

nārāyaṇāya vidmahe vāsudevāya dhīmahi /
tanno viṣṇuḥ pracodayāt // (61)

..... interlinking Viṣṇu with Nārāyaṇa and the son of Vasudeva
i.e. Kṛṣṇa.

A more positive support to this idea is found in the Mahābhārata.

The following verse states categorically :

anugrahārthaṁ lōkānāṁ viṣṇurlokanamaskṛtaḥ /
vasudevāttu devakyāṁ prādurbhūto mahāyaśāḥ // (62)

60) As Kṛṣṇa is the main subject under consideration in this thesis, the evolution of the Kṛṣṇa theme from Viṣṇu to Kṛṣṇa is traced. In the Mahābhārata one finds a complete identification of the Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa personalities. This is the work which contains certain information with regard to the early life of Kṛṣṇa. So here an attempt has been made to project the image of Viṣṇu through this work. The Rāmāyaṇa, a work on a completely different theme, though Rāma is an incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu, has not been consulted.

61) Tai.A. X-1-6

62) M.B.H. I-57-83

"Viṣṇu adored by the whole universe was born to the couple Vasudeva and Devakī, in order to give supreme benediction to the world".

If this is compared with the line of the Chāndogyopaniṣad (63)

kr̥ṣṇāya devakī-putrāya meaning 'to Kṛṣṇa the son of Devakī', Viṣṇu's identity with Kṛṣṇa is fully revealed for the first time. From the expressions like viṣṇuṃ gacchāmyahaṃ kṛṣṇaṃ (64) "I attain Viṣṇu who is Kṛṣṇa", viṣṇo jiṣṇo hare kṛṣṇa (65) "O, Viṣṇu, Jiṣṇu, Hari, Kṛṣṇa", viṣṇorjiṣṇorvasudevātma-jasya (66) "...of Viṣṇu, Jiṣṇu who is the son of Vasudeva", it becomes apparent that the poet has shown no difference between Viṣṇu and Kṛṣṇa. Viṣṇu has the name Govinda and Ananta that are very commonly used for Kṛṣṇa as well from the time of the Mahābhārata onwards (67). Elsewhere Vyāsa, directly has sung thus; viṣṇuparvaṃ śiśoścaryāṃ viṣṇoḥ kaṃsa-vadhastathā (68), while narrating the story of the Mahabharata in a nut shell in one of the chapters where he gives this information. "In the Viṣṇuparva section of the Harivaṃśa is hidden Kṛṣṇa's boyhood incidents and also the incident of Viṣṇu killing Kaṃsa". Vyāsa has identified Viṣṇu with Kṛṣṇa by saying that Viṣṇu killed Kaṃsa, who actually was killed by Kṛṣṇa.

The Bhagavadgītā has also certain important points to add to these. More than once Arjuna addresses Kṛṣṇa by the name Viṣṇu (69), Kṛṣṇa himself emphasises, "I am Viṣṇu among the Ādityas" (70). The statement by Kṛṣṇa, "to protect Dharma I take birth again and again" (71), reminds one of Viṣṇu (Prajāpati) appearing in different forms during the Vedic times to save the earth.

Apart from the apparent associations to the Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa

63. Ch.U. III-17-6

64) M.B.H. V-105-14

65) M.B.H. XII-43-5

66) M.B.H. VIII-57-48

67) M.B.H. V -68-13

68) M.B.H. vol 1-p 40-91*

69) dhṛtiṃ na vindāmi samaṃ ca viṣṇo B.G. XI-24

bhāsasvatograhḥ pratapanti viṣṇo B.G. XI-30

70) B.G. X-21

71) B.G. IV-8

identity discussed above, there are a few more statements which reveal more about this through actual comparisons. Some examples are given below: In the Āraṇyaka-parvan of the Mahābhārata Viṣṇu shows his form to the sage Mārkaṇḍeya, and in three complete chapters ^{there} are ample evidences and assertions of the identity of Viṣṇu, Prajāpati and Nārāyaṇa with Kṛṣṇa (72). The following extracts from the Mahābhārata may be observed.

"In this great work, Bhagavān Vāsudeva (Kṛṣṇa) is sung and praised. He is truth, universal law, purity and all that is good. He is eternal, Brahman, undestructible light, and he is the one whose great deeds are praised by great people." (73)

"The earth was brought out from the ocean by disturbing it, by Lord Viṣṇu (Govinda) showing his great valour, taking the form of a boar." (74)

"By you, O lotus eyed one, long ago, the earth which was lost, was restored to its place for the good of the world, by taking the form of a boar; The valorous, famous demon, Hiraṇyakaśipu, was destroyed by you by taking the Man-lion form. Even the indestructible demon Bali, was pushed and stamped down from the three worlds by you, by taking the form of a dwarf." (75)

"Viṣṇu is the Lord of Lords, Brahman, Īśvara, Vibhu and Prajāpati." (76)

Kṛṣṇa himself states in the Gīta "I am the sacrifice", "I am the essence of all the Vedas". (77).

Conclusion.

The importance of Visnu became very significant in Indian literature only after the advent of the Bhagavadgītā. A thorough examination of this great work and of the hymns addressed to Viṣṇu

72) M.B.H. III-186, 187 and 188 (chapters)

73) M.B.H. I-1-193 and 194.

74) gāṃ vindatā bhagavatā govindenāmitaujasā /
varāharūpiṇā cāntarvikṣobhita-jalāvilam / M.B.H. I-19-11

75) M.B.H. III-100-19, 20 and 21.

76) M.B.H. XIV-43-12

77) ahaṃ kraturahaṃ yajñaḥ B.G. IX-16
vedaīśca sarvairahameva vedyah B.G. XV-15.

in Vedic literature and his connection with Prajāpati, who is otherwise known as Virāṭpuruṣa, reveal some important points. In Vedic literature Prajāpati takes different forms to protect the earth and this has similarities with certain incarnations of Viṣṇu. Other characteristics of these two such as measuring the universe, being considered as the prime deities of sacrifice and also their inclination towards people have brought them much closer to each other. The similarity of the Puruṣa in the Puruṣasūkta with the universal form of Kṛṣṇa-Viṣṇu of the Bhagavadgītā (Chap.XI) has added to their identification (78). The only apparent difference between the Bhagavadgītā and Puruṣasūkta is in their language style - one vedic - the other classical. To give an example, according to the Puruṣasūkta the Puruṣa has thousands of heads, thousands of faces, thousands of hands and feet (79). The Prajāpatisūkta has the same idea in different words. "He has eyes everywhere. He has face every where, he has hands every where" (80); and coming to the Gītā, the same description occurs thus "O Lord I see you with innumerable hands, bellies, faces, eyes". It is at this juncture in the Gītā that one realises that Kṛṣṇa is Viṣṇu (81). His all powerful nature gets strengthened further with the identification of Nārāyaṇa with Viṣṇu, and to support this the Mahābhārata has a whole section, the nārāyaṇīya, wherein is revealed that Viṣṇu Nārāyaṇa and Kṛṣṇa are one and the same.

Sacrifice or the Lord of sacrifice is Viṣṇu. Sacrifice is not much different from the sacrificial fire to which all offerings

78) The B.H.P. words puruṣam puruṣasūktena upatasthe (X-1-20)

"They invoked the Puruṣa (Viṣṇu) by chanting the Puruṣasūkta" clearly shows the way the Indian mind was working regarding Puruṣa, Viṣṇu and Kṛṣṇa.

79) R.V. X-90-1

80) R.V. X-81-3

81) B.G. XI-16

are made. This fire is Agni. In the Satpatha Brāhmaṇa, Prajāpati is equated with Puruṣa (82) and in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa he is synonymous with the Veda (83). (Kṛṣṇa in the Gita says 'I am the essence of all the Vedas' B.G. XV-15) In both these occasions Prajāpati is known as Agni as well. There are other instances where Viṣṇu, Prajāpati and Agni come together, bringing these three vedic deities close to one another. Viṣṇu in the post Vedic period is probably a combination of these three and thus becomes very prominent. The popularity of Prajāpati and Viṣṇu in the later portions of the Vedas could be compared to the great popularity of the childhood and boyhood of Kṛṣṇa that took place in the post-epic literature though there are very few references to his boyhood in the Mahābhārata.

The emotional aspect of human nature has played quite a major role in the formation of these ideas, and it is this aspect that rules the post-epic literature where Viṣṇu Kṛṣṇa stand above all other deities. In this chapter an attempt has been made to understand how the common man might have accounted for the supremacy of Viṣṇu. Details and more references are left out as this deviates somewhat from the main purpose of the thesis.

82) S.P.B. VI-2-1-23

83) Ai.B. II-18.

4. BHAKTI

The root Bhaj means to participate, to share, and is often used to express love; with the suffix ktin added is derived the word Bhakti which means loving devotion. The word Bhakti as such occurs for the first time in the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad. There it is said -

yasya deve parā bhaktiḥ yathā deve tathā gurau /
tasyaite kathitāḥ charyāḥ prakāśante mahātmajah // (1)

"These truths, when taught, shine forth only in that high-souled one who has supreme devotion to God, and an equal degree of devotion to the spiritual teacher. They shine forth in that high souled one only" (2).

Though the Vedic literature that comes prior to this Upaniṣad does not have the actual word Bhakti, it has this idea defined in different ways. From the traditional view point Bhakti is as old as the Vedas, for the Vedas are composed in the form of prayers invoking certain aspects of nature through their presiding deities, for example to Viṣṇu, Indra, Sūrya, Agni (3).

In the Vedas are the following expressions: śraddhām
devā yajamānā vāyugopā upāsate (4) "Being guarded by Vāyu, Gods and men who perform sacrifice - pray to the goddess of faith."; mahaste viṣṇo sumatiḥ bhajāmahe (5) "Viṣṇu, the mighty one, may we enjoy your grace"; vande dārum vandamāno vivikmi (6) "Praising the kindness (of Indra) I salute him".

Here the root words upās, bhaj, vand give some clue as to the idea of worshipping, praying and saluting. These could be

1) Sv.U. VI-23

2) Sv.U. Translated by Swami Tyagisananda, p.133

3) agne naya supathā rāye asmān R.V. I-189-1

"O Agni please lead us in the right path."

4) R.V. X-151-4

5) R.V. I-156-3

6) R.V. VII-6-1

taken as the first few expressions of Bhakti as far as is available in the Vedic literature. The Vedas were succeeded by the Upaniṣads and here the word Bhakti found its exact meaning. 'Upaniṣat' this very word has in a way the sense of Bhakti. As most people are aware, the Upaniṣads are composed in the form of questions and answers. The meaning of the word Upaniṣad is "sitting close to each other", the master and the pupil. It is understood from this that to know the highest principle there is the absolute necessity of proximity. The student should be very attentive, ^{be} humble and respect his teacher (7). The quality of humility is very important. Statements like -

nāyamātmā pravacanena labhyaḥ /
na medhayā na bahunā śrutena / (8)

"The soul cannot be realised by skilful talking, not by intellect, nor by proud learning"; and naiṣā tarkeṇa matirāpāṇeyā (9)

"This knowledge cannot be acquired through argumented reasoning" add strength to the path of faith and devotion. In the Chāndogyo-paniṣad it is stated that yadeva vidyayā karoti, śraddhayopaniṣadā tadeva vīryavattaraṃ bhavati (10) "Whatever is carried out knowing what it is, with faith and devotion, that alone prevails". The Rgveda invokes "Aum - may we O Gods, hear what is auspicious with our ears; Oh ye, who are worthy of worship, may we see with our eyes what is auspicious ... may Indra of increasing glory, bestow prosperity on us ..." (11).

The Taittiriya Upaniṣad opens with the prayer "May Mitra (the Sun) be good to us; may Varuṇa be good to us, May Viṣṇu of wide

7) Sv.U. VI-23

8) K.U. I-2-23

9) K.U. I-2-9

10) Ch.U. I-1-10

11) bhadraṃ karṇebhiśśruṇuyāma devāḥ /
bhadraṃ paśyemākṣbhīryajatrāḥ / R.V. I-89-8
.. svastina indro vṛddhaśśravāḥ .. / R.V. I-89-6

strides be favourable to us. Salutations to Brahmā, salutations to thee, O Vāyu ... " (12).

The Īśāvāsyā Upaniṣad proclaims "(know that) all this, whatever moves in this moving world, is enveloped by God. Therefore find your enjoyment in renunciation; do not covet what belongs to others" (13). In all the above lines from the different Upaniṣads in one way or other the sense devotion is suggested. This could be shown further by several other examples from different Upaniṣads as well.

With an example from the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad, the concept of Bhakti in the Vedic and Upaniṣadic literature may be concluded. "In Him who, of old, creates Brahmā and delivers the Vedas to him, to that God who is enlightened by His own intelligence, I, desirous of absolution, take refuge" (14).

Bhakti in the Mahābhārata.

The Mahābhārata traditionally begins with the verse nārāyaṇaṁ namaskṛtya, "Having offered salutations to Lord Nārāyaṇa ...". Though the Epic mainly deals with the history of the Kuru and Pāṇḍu races, it is a known fact that Kṛṣṇa otherwise called by different names such as Nārāyaṇa, Keśava, Vāsudeva occupies the whole epic and later it is revealed that he is the incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu.

As the epic progresses one finds numerous instances illustrated to define what is Bhakti and what its result would be (15). But from the point of the present thesis here is a short account of how

12) śanno mitraśśaṁ varuṇaḥ .. śanno viṣṇururukramaḥ ..
namo brahmaṇe namaste vāyo ... Tai.U. I-1.

13) īśāvāsyamidam sarvaṁ yatkiñca jagatyāṁ jagat /
tena tyaktena bhuñjīthā māgrdhaḥ kasyasviddhanam // I.U. I

Translated by S. Radhakrishnan, p.567

14) Sv.U. VI-18

15) The whole story of the Mahābhārata is the story of devotees like the Pāṇḍavas, Bhīṣma, Vidura and others.

this Bhakti which does not appear to be predominant in Vedic literature may have occupied such a respectable position (16).

A study of the Bhagavadgītā would clear any doubts and it would also help in establishing the prominence of Kṛṣṇa Bhakti that eventually explains the great Vaiṣṇava movements which spread all over India.

The Bhagavadgītā takes the form of a dialogue between Kṛṣṇa, the master, and Arjuna, the pupil. In this sense this could also be called an Upaniṣad. The Gītā mainly deals with the three paths to one's final goal - ie., Mokṣa - liberation. Those paths are - the path of knowledge, Jñānamārga or -yoga, the path of action, Karmamārga or -yoga, and finally the path of devotion, Bhaktimārga or -yoga. Jñānamārga or the path of knowledge - as the very name indicates, does not apply to ordinary people and similarly the path of action - Karmamārga (yoga) of the Gītā which really means disinterested Karma was not that easy to follow, but the path of devotion was comparatively simple for it had very few prerequisites. Bhakti is stressed more in the Bhagavadgītā than any other older scriptures. The Gītā treats all the three paths to liberation to the same degree. But the devotees or the followers have made their chosen path the most important one at their time. Thus Śaṅkara and his followers upheld the path of Jñāna or knowledge over the other two, Rāmānuja and Madhva upheld Bhakti over the other two. Strictly speaking, these three paths are too interconnected with each other. The three together provide a wide spectrum for man's efforts and achievement catering to an enormous range of capabilities as wide as the world itself. Each to his own capability can reach the ultimate. To none is such an effort impossible.

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- 16) The expressions 'does not appear' is made, for, the implication of the sense of the word Bhakti was already there as has been illustrated in previous pages, but the designation 'Bhakti' was not common.

No one is destitute for there is always God next to him - near him. Hope and assurance are the main thread and theme of this celestial song.

A study of the Gītā from the stand point of a common man reveals a few more points. (A) To understand Him realising that the body is different from the soul, and though the body perishes, the soul is always there, etc., this is necessary. This state of mind, no doubt, is required for a better knowledge of Him, but is certainly difficult for a layman. (B) Jñāna Mārga involves too many pre-requisites such as Vedic knowledge, reasoned thinking and everything connected with the intellect. So ordinary people find it hard to cope with all this. (C) On the other hand to expect a performance of disinterested Karma from those who are born of flesh and blood - is asking for too much at such an early stage. (D) So Bhakti, which has little prerequisites unlike the other two paths, became the guide light, and the majority of people took to it. Here is an attempt to summarise the type of Bhakti - 'Devotion' as found in the Bhagavadgītā.

The whole of the 12th chapter of the Bhagavadgītā is dedicated to the discussion regarding devotion. Therein Lord Kṛṣṇa answers the questions of Arjuna and shows how great the path of devotion is. The first reference to devotion in the Gītā is seen in the following verse:

sa evāyaṁ mayā te ' dya yogaḥ proktaḥ purātanaḥ /
bhaktō'si me sakhā ceti rahasyaṁ hyetaduttamam // (17)

"Thus that very Yoga which is ancient, secret and supreme I have taught you now, for you are my devotee and also a friend".

Kṛṣṇa emphasises that he blesses Arjuna with the highest Yoga, for Arjuna is his devotee and a friend. A little further he says -

17) B.G. IV-3.

yo yo yām yām tanuṃ bhaktāḥ śraddhayārcitumicchati /
tasya tasyācalām śraddhām tāmeva vidadhāmyaham // (18)

"Whatever form a Bhakta wants to worship faithfully, in that very form I make his faith firmly established". The Gītā has very forceful statements regarding Bhakti and Bhakta. Though it does not define what Bhakti is in a direct way, through its stress on morality and on a code of conduct, it has expressed what it is to be a Bhakta i.e. a devotee and thence has established the firm foundation of Bhakti.

Arjuna was in such a dilemma that it seemed absolutely impossible to bring him back to his normal self. He was a human being like anybody else and it is but natural for him to feel terribly upset when he required to fight his own grandfather, teacher and cousins. He was in no mood to accept Kṛṣṇa's philosophical sayings about life and death and the like. No man can afford to be free from emotions, feelings, and sentiments, and Arjuna was no exception. He does not find a solution for his problem either in the path of knowledge or in the path of action, for both of them have very little to do with one's heart. He needed some assurance, some strength from Kṛṣṇa whom he knew to be the Lord of Lords (19). Hence Kṛṣṇa finally arrives at the reasoning which appeals to Arjuna most. The roots of this were already seen in certain words spoken by Him such as -

yatkaroṣi yadaśnāsi yajjuhosi dadāsi yat /
yattapasyasi kaunteya tatkuruṣva madarpaṇam // (20)

"Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever your oblation to the sacred fire, whatever you give as charity and whatever penance you perform, O Arjuna - offer it to me " i.e. in other words 'think what ever you do, you have done it for me'. Only one who really is the Lord could give such an assurance. Further, one finds

18) B.G. VII-21

19) B.G. X-12,13&14

20) B.G. IX-27

expressions such as puruṣaḥ sa paraḥ pārtha bhaktyā labhyastva-
nanyayā (21) "that highest Puruṣa is obtainable through undisturbed
devotion". kaunteya pratijānīhi na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati (22)
"O - Arjuna know this - my devotee will never perish". manmanā
bhava madbhakto madyājī māṃ namaskuru (23) "Place your mind on me,
be devoted to me, serve me and show obeisance to me". At that stage
of the dialogue Arjuna regains his normal composure. His idea of
Kṛṣṇa changing every minute reaches a point where he realises His
greatness. Kṛṣṇa again says ye bhajanī tu mām bhaktyā mayi te teṣu
cāpyaḥ (24) "whoever prays to me with devotion I am in them and
they - in me". Emphasis on devotion to God can be seen in more
detail in the 12th chapter. This whole chapter deals with the
question as to who is a real devotee.

ye tu sarvāṇi karmāṇi mayi samnyasya matparāḥ /
ananyenaiva yogena mām dhyāyanta upāsate//
teṣāmaḥ samuddhartā mṛtyusaṃsārasāgarāt /
bhavāmi na cirātpārtha mayyāveśita cetasām // (25)

"Those who completely depend on me and, surrendering all actions to
me, worship me, constantly meditating on me, with undisturbed mind,
them, whose mind is fixed on me, Arjuna, I uplift instantly from
the mortal world". Still further occur the prerequisites of a
Bhakta: "He who has no enmity towards all beings, is friendly, compa-
ssionate, free from selfishness, pride, unchanged in happiness and
sorrow, is of forgiving nature, always contented, mentally united
with me, has controlled his soul, is firm in his decisions, has
offered his mind and intellect to me - such a devotee of me is dear
to me" (26).

The Gītā goes further putting more emphasis on devotion

- 21) B.G. VIII-22a.
- 22) B.G. IX-31b.
- 23) B.G. XVIII-65a.
- 24) B.G. IX-29
- 25) B.G. XII-6 and 7
- 26) B.G. XII-13 and 14.

in every verse - one finds such expressions as yo me bhaktaḥ sa me priyaḥ; bhaktimān yassa me priyaḥ; bhaktimān me priyo naraḥ; bhaktā-stetiva me priyāḥ (27). "He who is devoted to me is dear to me, my devotees are my dear ones..." again and again giving confidence to Arjuna and all other devotees. As Lord Kṛṣṇa reaches the culminating phase of his advice his words become more profound and more powerful. He sees Arjuna still in some dilemma and still having certain doubts as to what to do. The words he proclaims at this stage themselves reveal something of his concern towards Arjuna, a Bhakta.

sarvadharmān parityajya māmekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja /
ahaṁ tvā sarvapāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ // (28)

"Having resigned all your duties, take refuge in me alone. Then I shall liberate you from all types of sins. Do not worry".

idaṁ te nātapaskāya nābhaktāya kadācana / (29)

"You should never reveal the essence of this teaching to one who does not do any penance, who is not devoted."

ya imaṁ param^{am} guhyam madbhakteṣvabhīdhāsyati /
bhaktiṁ mayi parāṁ kṛtvā mamevaiṣyatyasaṁśayaḥ // (30)

"He who being completely devoted to me spreads this great secret gospel among my devotees, comes to me. There is no doubt about this." The idea of the secret of the love of the supreme can only be fathomed by a Bhakta; only he can give expression to it. Thus Kṛṣṇa having summed up his teachings finally tells Arjuna to take refuge in Him alone, surrendering his self completely to Him. Kṛṣṇa's condition was that this being done he would free Arjuna from all his sins and worries. Through these encouraging, soothing and truth revealing words of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna is restored to his mental strength. He found in Kṛṣṇa a great source of all that is

27) B.G. XII-14, 16, 17, 19 and 20.

28) B.G. XVIII-66

29) B.G. XVIII-67A

30) B.G. XVIII-68

good, perfect and kind, and comes back to his usual self without any mental, physical and psychological stress as Kṛṣṇa was there to relieve him of his predicaments. Arjuna was a devotee of the highest order and Kṛṣṇa made the effort to teach him the highest truth at the right time when such an advice was badly needed. This what Arjuna utters at the end.

naṣṭo mohah smṛtirlabdhā tvatprasādānmayācyuta /
sthito'smi gatasandehah kariṣye vacanam tava // (31)

"My delusion is gone, and I have gained wisdom. Achuta - This is all because of your grace. Now that all my doubts are cleared, I shall do as you say". Arjuna has genuinely expressed the idea of the relation between a devotee in the words - kariṣye vacanam tava - "I shall do as you say". Each individual, however small or big he or she is, will have his or her own doubts, difficulties and weaknesses, and when he or she could realise His presence and devote himself or herself completely to Him, all the obstacles will be removed. Arjuna is the obvious example. Kṛṣṇa has said -

ye bhajanti tu mām bhaktyā mayi te teṣu cāpyaham / (32)

"Whoever prays to me with love, devotion, I am in them and they are in me."

patraṃ puṣpaṃ phalaṃ toyaṃ yo me bhaktyā prayacchati /
tadahaṃ bhaktyupahṛtaḥ aśnāmi prayatātmanaḥ // (33)

"A leaf, a flower, a fruit, or even a drop of water, given to me with love by whom so ever, that gift, a result of pure love, from a sincere seeker, I partake of".

There is no obstacle whatsoever on the eligibility to become His devotee. He who has love in his heart for Him is His devotee and He becomes what the devotee wants Him to be. Lord Kṛṣṇa in the verse above has summed up the simplicity of the path of devotion

31) B.G. XVIII-73

32) B.G. IX-29b

33) B.G. IX-26.

and has brought home to the masses the greatness of love to one's God in whom one can share his all, in all. Arjuna here, stands for all the devotees, and Kṛṣṇa for the Supreme. Everyone knows how Arjuna and his brothers, who were great devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa, overcame all their difficulties. Apart from the Pāṇḍavas who were among the foremost devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa, we have in the Mahābhārata episode, several others who were equally devoted to the Lord. For instance Vidura, the uncle of both the cousins, may be quoted as one, and Bhīṣma the great grandfather of the cousins as another, and there are many more.

J. Gonda says this about the Bhakti of the Gita: " .. Bhakti was better adapted to a Visnuite background, of which it was to remain a very distinctive feature, no doubt because in the Gītā the central position of Kṛṣṇa himself as the teacher and his continual references to his divinity and to his willingness to help and save those who approach him devotedly were much more fitted to appeal to the hearer's emotions and to sustain the bhakti conceptions than the more abstract and impersonal teaching of Śvetāśvatara". (34)

Conclusion.

It is evident that the idea of the multitude in one, and one in the multitude, expressed in Indian philosophy was not merely confined to the relationship of God, the Supreme, with mankind and the universe, but extended also to the idea of God itself. In that dimension the prominence given to Viṣṇu stems from the fact that to Him is attributed the task of preservation. At all times, Vedic or post-Vedic, whatever form of the worshipped deity fulfilled this task, became none other than Viṣṇu to the Vaiṣṇavas. Whatever this be, the common thread that runs through all these ideas is the task of preservation and protection. The deity in order to fulfil this

34) J. Gonda, Visnuism Sivaism, a comparison. p.22.

has to be a source^{of} compassion, and a haven for those seeking his refuge. All the forms and names integrated in Viṣṇu satisfy these requirements and it is this that the sages and poets like the bards of the Upaniṣads and Mahārṣi Vyāsa have brought out and emphasised in their works.

5. BHĀGAVATADHARMA

Prelude:

Bhagavān Viṣṇu is the Lord Supreme. He is possessed of endless power and matchless qualities; serving him with devotion results in liberation. This is in short Bhāgavatadharmā. Sanskrit bhaga means 'happiness', 'omnipotence', 'virtue'. It has been derived from the root bhaj to 'share', with the suffix gha added to it. The one who possesses the above mentioned qualities is called Bhagavān. As Lord Viṣṇu was considered the giver of happiness (1), and the one with many virtues (2), he came to be known as Bhagavān. Those who followed him and who adored him for this, and many other adorable qualities, were known as the Bhāgavatas.

Bhakti is the anchor of Bhāgavatadharmā. The words Bhāgavata and Bhakti share the common root bhaj indicative of their close relationship. Bhakti is the path for liberation according to this Dharma. Madhvācārya, the founder of the Dvaita School of Philosophy says:

māhātmya-jñāna-pūrvastu sudṛḍhaḥ sarvato'dhikah /
sneho bhaktiriti proktaḥ tayā muktirnacānyathā // (3)

"Such undisturbed adoration gained through the knowledge of the Supreme being and his attributes is devotion, the path to liberation, and there is no other way".

The Beginning:

The first sign of the Bhāgavatadharmā may be seen

1) R.V. I-154-5.

2) maṅgalyaṃ maṅgalaṃ viṣṇuṃ vareṇyamanaghaṃ śucim / M.B.H. I-1-22

"(Having saluted such being) Who is Viṣṇu, the beneficent and the very benificiance, the most excellent, spotless, pure .. (I will explain the thoughts of great Vyāsa, thus spoke the sage Sūta)!"

sa hi satyamṛtaṃ caiva pavitraṃ puṇyameva ca / M.B.H. I-1-193b.

"He is true, he is right, sacred and holy .."

3) MBh. T.N. I-86

in the Mahābhārata:

vaiṣṇavo'si mahīpāla ravivamśa vivardhana /
yena tvayā purā viṣṇuḥ toṣitaḥ śubhakarmanā// (4)

"O King, the glorifier of the solar race, as Viṣṇu has been pleased by you in the past, you are a Vaiṣṇava". Words such as vaiṣṇavaḥ viṣṇuḥ toṣitaḥ are relative terms. When one ponders over the meaning of this verse one can easily comprehend the word Bhāgavata from the word Vaiṣṇava. The term Bhāgavata gained currency only after the Bhāgavatapurāṇa. From here, the word Bhāgavata has been traced to the word Vaiṣṇava for this also refers to the devotees of Viṣṇu, Nārāyaṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Vāsudeva. There are many similar allusions in the Viṣṇu and the Bhāgavatapurāṇa. The Bhagavadgītā which is a part of the Mahābhārata along with the Bhāgavatapurāṇa (composed much later) became the most sacred works for the Bhāgavatas. According to them both these works teach the path of Bhakti (devotion) that leads to mokṣa (liberation). Kṛṣṇa himself says in the Bhagavadgītā:

bhaktyā tvananyayā śaktaḥ ahaṃ evaṃ vidho'rjuna /
jñātuṃ draṣṭuṃ ca tattvena praveṣṭuṃ ca parantapa // (5)

"But by single-minded devotion attainable I am and I may in this form, Arjuna O' scorcher of foes be known, seen and also accessible".

The Nārāyaṇīya :

It is the Nārāyaṇīya section of the Mahābhārata that has certain definite information to Bhāgavatadharmā in its exact sense. Nārāyaṇīya deals with the story of the previous incarnations of Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna in the form of Nara and Nārāyaṇa and this was revealed to Janamejaya (great grandson of the Pāṇḍavas) by the sage Vaiśampāyana.

Several verses of this portion of the epic describe the glory of Lord Nārāyaṇa and also describe how he should be worshipped.

4) M.B.H. Vol 2. p.710, 1798*

5) B.G. XI-54.

According to this, the concept of Ēkāntadharmā - is the best among all practice and is beloved to Lord Nārāyaṇa.

nūnaṃ ekāntadharmo'yaṃ śreṣṭho nārāyaṇapriyaḥ / (6)

"This ekāntadharmā is certainly the best of all practices and is dear to Lord Nārāyaṇa". Ekānta means private, alone, solitude or the prime end or the only goal. The word ekāntadharmā stands as a synonym to Bhāgavatadharmā as it is called today.

Janamejaya asks Vaiśampāyana as to who first promulgated this Dharma. Vaiśampāyana answers

samūpodheśvanīkeṣu kurupāṇḍavayormṛdhe /
arjune vimanske ca gītā bhagavatā svayam // (7)

"When the war was about to begin between the Kurupāṇḍavas, this (concept of devotion) was told by the great Lord himself to Arjuna who was worried". Here one also comes across the word sāttvata-dharma. Sāttvata is the name of a king of the race of the Yadus. Later Yādavas were also known as Sāttvatas. As Kṛṣṇa was the most famous of this race he was also known as Sāttvata. The dharma that shows respect to Kṛṣṇa thus also came to be known as Sāttvatadharmā. The incident narrated is as follows:

Lord Nārāyaṇa was thinking about the creation of the universe when a being came out of his ear. Calling him Brahman, Nārāyaṇa asked him to create living beings and he also gave him a code of conduct (to be spread among those beings) which goes by the name of Sāttvata religion.

dharmañca matto grṇhīśva sāttvato nāma nāmataḥ / (8)

"Receive this dharma from me - which has the name Sāttvata".

A little further in Nārāyaṇīya we again find this verse -

tenaivādyena dharmeṇa brahmā lokavisargakṛt /
pūjayāmāsa deveśaṃ hariṃ nārāyaṇam vibhum // (9)

"By that first dharma, Brahmā the creator of the world, worshipped

6) M.B.H. XII-336-4a.

7) M.B.H. XII-336-8

8) M.B.H. XII-336-27A.

9) M.B.H. XII-336-32.

Lord Hari, Nārāyaṇa - the God of Gods". This dharma is also called Pañcarātra (10). Having explained Sāttvatadharmā in detail Vaiśaṃpāyana addresses Janamejaya "O King, to you Sāttvatadharmā is now told. Practise this faithfully. Lord Nārāyaṇa is the cause of everything", and, finally he has this to say :

kṛṣṇa eva hi lokānāṃ bhāvano mohanastathā /
saṃhāarakārakaścaiva kāraṇam ca viṣāṃ pate // (11)

"Kṛṣṇa is the protector of the universe and its beguiler. He is the destroyer and the cause, O King".

Once again Vyāsa has made it clear that there is no difference between Kṛṣṇa and Nārāyaṇa up to the final verse. He speaks of Lord Nārāyaṇa, and then says "follow this dharma, for Kṛṣṇa is the root cause of everything in this world".

That the Bhāgavatadharmā was prevalent in the 2nd.C. B.C. is understood from the Besnagar Inscription which states that a Garuḍa pillar was erected to Vāsudeva, the Lord of Lords, by Heliodorus, a Bhagavata (12).

A reference to Gupta coin inscriptions and statues state that Bhāgavatadharmā prevailed in between the above date and the 6th and 7th C.A.D. In his book, Vaisnavism, Saivism and minor religious systems R.G. Bhandarkar writes: "The Gupta princes, Chandra Gupta II, Kumara Gupta, and Skanda Gupta, are styled Paramabhagavatas on their coins. They were thus worshippers of Bhagavat or Vasudeva. Their dates range from 400 to 464 C.A.D.. There is a pillar at Bhitari in the ^hGaziapur district of the U.P., on which is an inscription which records the installation of an image of Śārṅgin (13)

10) M.B.H. XII-336-75 to 77 11) M.B.H. XII-336-82

12) Epigraphica Indica. Vol. X.p.63 (appendix) Inscription No.669

13) Lord Viṣṇu's bow is called Śārṅga and hence he is called Śārṅgin.

and the grant of a village for its worship by Skanda Gupta, whose dates range between 454 and 464 C.A.D." (14).

The coming of the Ālvār

During the same period in Tamilnadu there were a group of devotees called Ālvār who were great Vaiṣṇavas. They sang and praised Lord Viṣṇu especially in his Kṛṣṇa form. While the date for the Ālvār must remain uncertain, 7-9th A.D. would be a reasonable assumption. Earlier praise of Viṣṇu as well as of Subramanya were included in Paripāṭal, one of the Ēṭṭuttokai. This text is held to be slightly anterior to the Śaiva Tevāram which is known to date from the 7th.C. A.D. onward. Then during the time of Rāmānuja (11 C.A.D.) Bhāgavatadharma spread. He was a leader of a certain group of people who later became famous by the name Viśiṣṭādvaitins. Rāmānuja wrote commentaries on the Bhagavadgītā, the Upaniṣads and the Brahmasūtras which support Bhāgavatadharma. He migrated from Tamilnadu to Karnataka and spread this Dharma there.

Madhva and His followers:

Madhvācārya who established the Dvaita philosophy lived around 13thC. A.D. and is known among the Haridāsas of Karnataka as the greatest propounder of Bhāgavatadharma. He brought out the principles of Bhāgavatadharma in his commentaries on the Brahmasūtras, Upaniṣads and Bhagavadgītā. He also says that devotion filled with knowledge is the way to God realisation.

vinā jñānaṃ kuto bhaktiḥ kuto bhaktiṃ vinā ca tat / (15).

Madhva was followed by the Haridāsas of Karnataka who brought forth the principles of this Bhāgavatadharma in their songs. The writings of Madhva inspired these Dāsas and also devotees in Maharashtra and other states eg., Tukārām, Caitanya and others.

Progress and Momentum to the Bhakti movement:

The importance of Bhakti received momentum from the teachings

14) R.G. Bhandarkar, Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and minor religions, p.43.

15) Madhvācārya, Gītā Bhāṣya IX.31.

Systems

of the Lord in the Bhagavadgītā, where for the first time the absolute necessity of Bhakti is stressed. As it was simpler than the path of knowledge and action it became more popular. But as it was the embryonic stage of Bhakti which had not freed itself from its philosophical intricacies there must have been a large number of people who still had difficulty in adopting it. From the later sections of the Mahābhārata where Bhīṣma preaches the duties of a king to Dharmaraja (16) and from the Nārāyaṇīya it is very clear that this doctrine of devotion had already been put into practice. A continuance of the same theme is found in the Harivaṃśa which deals with the family of Kṛṣṇa, and again in the Viṣṇupurāṇa which gives information on the different incarnations of Viṣṇu. The doctrine of devotion found its full form as revealed to the masses in its every aspect in the Bhāgavatapurāṇa which is the Life of Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa and his devotees. The Nārada and Śāṇḍilya Bhakti Sūtras have treated the significance of Bhakti elaborately and these were believed to have been composed earlier than the Bhāgavatapurāṇa (17).

The Main text for the Bhakti movement:

The Bhāgavatapurāṇa, as the very name indicates - is a treatise dealing with that which belongs to Bhagavat. Here only one finds the accounts of many of the devotees of Lord Viṣṇu and also a very detailed history of the early days of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The book is full of instances telling about God's grace on those who are his devotees and also about how one should conduct oneself towards one's personal God. The name Bhāgavata may be understood as applied to the devotees of the Lord. In every chapter one finds emphasised the greatness of the Lord and the greatness of Bhakti to

16) M.B.H. XII -chapter 56 and onwards.

17) The Nārada Bhakti Sūtra, which is the better known and simpler of the two as well, has the definition and fundamental details of the doctrine of Bhakti and it will be discussed at the end of this chapter.

Him. Bhakti is also dealt with in its varied forms exhaustively and with numerous illustrations in this work. It is because of the importance given to the doctrine of Bhakti in one's life and also of the simple and very efficient treatment of this theme that the Bhakti cult owes its popularity to this Purāṇa.

There are many instances discussed showing the importance of devotion; only a few of these are picked to give an idea of Bhakti in the Bhāgavatapurāṇa.

vāsudevaparā vedā, vāsudevaparā makhāḥ /
vāsudevaparā yogā vāsudevaparā kriyāḥ //
vāsudevaparam jñānam vāsudevaparam tapaḥ /
vāsudevaparo dharmo vāsudevaparā gatiḥ //. (18)

"The Vedas, the Sacrifices, the Yogas, all actions speak of and glorify Lord Vāsudeva. Vāsudeva represents knowledge and penance. Dharma is there where there is Vāsudeva and he verily is the final goal".

ātmārāmāśca munayo nirgranthā apyurukrame /
kurvantyahaitukīm bhaktim ittham bhūtaguṇo hariḥ // (19)

"The sages practise selfless devotion to Hari, though they delight only in the Self and though they have disconnected themselves from the knots of worldliness. Such is the greatness of Lord Hari".

Though the sages were enjoying in themselves (ie. in the company of the highest soul) they had reposed undisturbed devotion in Lord Hari. Knowledge and Enlightenment which the state of sage indicate are nothing but great assets to the path of devotion and the happiness that it gives.

The Lord himself has this to say about his devotees.

sādhavo hṛdayam mahyam sādhuṇām hṛdayantvham /
madanyatte na jñanti nāham tebhyo manāgapī // (20)

"Pious men (devotees) are in my heart and I am in theirs. They do

18) B.H.P. I-2-28, 29

19) B.H.P. I-7-10

20) B.H.P. IX-4-68

not know anything but me, I also do not know anything but them". This is a great source of strength to devotees for they have a Lord with whom they can share everything and who reciprocates to the same measure. The devotee and the Lord are inseparable.

The 11th chapter of the Bhāgavatapurāṇa has a more detailed treatment on devotion and devotees. Kṛṣṇa had left Br̥ndāvana and Gokul for ever, but his beloved friends and Gopis, the cowherd girls, were all still there. He had to send them some message about his concern for them, and he chose one of his friends and a great devotee, Uddhava, to deliver this. The words which have been uttered by the Lord at that specific time bear the deepest expression of devotion. Here are a few examples from this chapter.

na sādhyati mām yogo na sāṅkhyam dharma uddhava /
na svādhyāyastapasyāgo yathā bhaktirmamorjitā //
bhaktyāham ekayā grāhyaḥ śraddhayātmā priyaḥ satām / (21)

"Neither Yoga nor Sāṅkhya nor righteousness nor study of the Vedas (or Japa of the Divine name), austerity or renunciation captivates Me (so thoroughly) as does intense Devotion. I, the beloved Self of the righteous, can be captured only through exclusive Devotion coupled with reverence." (22)

katham vinā romahaṣaṇam dravatā cetasā vinā /
vinānandāśrukalayā śuddhyedbhaktyā vināśayaḥ //
vaggadgada dravate yasya cittam rudatyabhikṣnam hasati kvacicca /
vilajja udgayati nrtyate ca madbhaktiyukto bhuvanam punati. (23)

"How can Devotion be known except through the hair standing on end or through one's heart melting or through tears of joy (trickling down one's cheeks) and how can one's mind be purified except through Devotion? A man full of devotion to Me, - who speaks in a voice choked with emotion, whose heart melts (through affection), who weeps incessantly (at the thought of ^{his} separation from Me) and sometimes laughs (when reminded of the inwardness

21) B.H.P. XI-14-20, 21

22) H.P. Poddar, Tr. Kalyana Kalpataru, No.6, p.421.

23) B.H.P. XI-14-23, 24

of My pastimes), (nay) who sings unabashed at the top of his voice and dances (out of joy), - purifies the (whole) world" (24).

People have worked very hard to come to a conclusion as to what represents the goal of human life or what constitutes the ethics of life. The Bhāgavata's easy solution to this problem is in the following verse:

dharmārtakāmamokṣākhyam ya icchecchreya ātmanah /
ekameva harestatra kārāṇam pādasevanam // (25)

"He who desires to uplift himself through the path of Dharma duty, justice, Artha, worldly wealth, Kāma, sensual pleasure and Mokṣa liberation, there is only one way for him i.e. serving the feet of Lord Hari".

The Nārada and Śāṇḍilyabhaktisūtras.

The theme of Bhakti as treated in several chapters of the Mahābhārata and later more exhaustively in the Bhāgavatapurāṇa would be incomplete without Nārada and Śāṇḍilyabhaktisūtras. The two works mainly deal with the theory and practice of Bhakti in detail.

The date of these sutras, like many other ancient Indian works is uncertain. Scholars have different opinions regarding this. According to R.G. Bhandarkar and Dr. Schrader Vaiṣṇava-Saṃhitās are post-Christian compositions dating between 3rd and 8th C. However Duncan Greenlees refutes this view in saying that they belong to a much earlier date (26). The controversy continues. The two sūtras might have appeared on the scene after the Mahābhārata (including the Harivaṃśa) period for they contain information regarding the childhood of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Of the two, the Nāradabhaktisūtras is more popular and this may be due to the simplicity of the expressions and also due to the fact that, Nārada, a great devotee of Lord Viṣṇu, is

24) H.P. Poddar, Tr, Kalyana Kalpataru, No.6, p.421

25) B.H.P. IV-8-41.

26) Duncan Greenlees, ed., Gospel of Narada, p. XXVII onwards.

associated with this work. However, both these works stress the Bhakti aspect on the same lines.

Śāṇḍilya defines Bhakti as sāparānuraktirīśvare (27) "It is supreme love reposed in God". This definition has much in common with that of Nārada's definition. sātvasmin paramarpremarūpā (28) "Bhakti is but the highest love incarnate towards Him". Nārada goes further and says that it is higher than Karma and Jñāna for Bhakti is itself the result in fruition.

sā tu karmajñānebhyo'pyadhikatarā svayaṃ
phalarūpatvāt / (29)

To the question how such a devotion could be achieved, Nārada says

tattu viśayatyāgāt saṅgatyāgācca / (30)

"It is attained by denouncing material pleasure and also the company of others". One should always meditate upon Him - renouncing all other enjoyment and company. With regard to "how will be the love of God?" Nārada has this to say -

anirvacanīyaṃ premasvarūpam / (31)

"The love (of God) is beyond all expressions." mukāsvādanavat (32)

"Just like a dumb-man having tasted something good is yet unable to describe it". What Nārada states regarding the experience of love towards one's lord is very true. When somebody is happy regarding worldly things he can express his happiness through words, but the happiness that one gets in the company of one's Lord is unlike any worldly happiness and hence words cannot reveal its essence. The example of a dumb-man that sage Nārada gives is very apt here. What is felt cannot be expressed. However this experience can be

27) S.B.S. 2

28) N.B.S. 2

29) N.B.S. 25, 26

30) N.B.S. 35

31) N.B.S. 51

32) N.B.S. 52

evidenced in certain worthy individuals. prakāśate kvāpi pātre (33)

"It shines forth in some worthy souls" (34).

Unlike the path of knowledge and Karma which were the property mostly of the higher castes, there was no restriction in the path of Bhakti. It was open to one and all. Thus, to become a devotee, one needs only to love Him with a pure heart. Those who have a pure heart - whether they are rich or poor, brahmins or the low born - can all become His beloved ones. Nārada describes -

nāsti teṣu jātividyārūpakulādhanakriyādibhedah / (35)

"Among devotees there is no discrimination of caste, learning, form, class, wealth and the form of work they do". It is a simple and robust path. That is why it became so popular in so short a time.

A man, though a sinner, is welcome to become a devotee. After all human beings are born with certain weaknesses. When they do something wrong they need somebody to correct them and assure them that they can overcome their weaknesses. Bhakti-mārga gave such a hope and has uplifted those plunged in despair even to the point of suicide. Śāṇḍilya asserts :

laghvapi bhaktādhikāre mahatkṣepakama^āprasarvahānāḥ (36)

"In the case of the devotee, an act of devotion, ^{even} though it be slight, is capable of destroying great sins, because of its power of doing away with all ^{other} sins" (37).

According to Nārada, a devotee should completely surrender himself to the Lord. Whatever he does he should offer it to the

33) N.B.S. 53

34) Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa, who are the main devotees consulted in regard to the present thesis may be given as two examples for this.

35) N.B.S. 72

36) S.B.S. 76

37) Swami Sivananda - Bhakti and Sankirtan with Sandilya Sutras p.143

Lord; then only the Lord comes to his help. Narada says:

tadarpitākṣhīlācārah san kāmakrodhābhimāṇḍikam
tasminneva karaṇīyam / (38)

"Having offered his all to Him, he should show his love, anger arrogance and other qualities only to him".

Devotion and its expressions:

The Bhāgavata states:

sa vai pumsām paro dharmo yato bhaktiradhokṣje / (39)

"Devotion towards Adhokṣaja (Viṣṇu) is the highest Dharma for mankind". Devotion is such that once it is realised a man needs nothing else. Nārada puts it correctly thus:

yajñātvā matto bhavati stabhdo bhavati
ātmārāmo bhavati / (40)

"Having realised it he becomes intoxicated (in his love) becomes still (in his ecstasy) and also enjoys his very self". The practical aspect of all these sayings have appeared in the life of Purandara-dāsa and Kanakadāsa and this will be treated in due course.

A quotation from Robert S Ellwood may be cited here.

"In devotionalism individuals seek liberation within an interpersonal relationship. Its achievement in those moments of love is so intense that only the beloved-or perhaps only the emotion of love-exists in a timeless now. But here the beloved is not of flesh but divine. Devotion seeks the combination of two of the most common media of ecstatic experience, eros and religion. The object of love is the concept or image of a transcendent person who has all the charm and perfection of a lover's dream yet who also has immortality and the power of the universe" (41).

Thus the path of devotion enjoyed a great reputation and

38) N.B.S. 65

39) B.H.P. I-2-6a

40) N.B.S. 6

41) Robert S, Ellwood, Jr., Mysticism and Religion, p.53

popularity taking its origin from the Lord himself and supported by such great devotees as Hanumān, Vibhīṣaṇa, the Pāṇḍavas, Bhīṣma, Vidura, Nārada, Akrūra, Prahlāda, Uddhava, the Gopis and others.

Bhakti on a broad spectrum.

Love and affection with respect and regards towards one's Lord are aspects of Bhakti. The ideal and worshipped deity could be of two types: One, having Nirākāra Paramātmā (formless ultimate soul) as the ideal and the second one, having Sākāra Paramātmā (ultimate soul with form) as the ideal. It is rather difficult to adore and think of Him as the One who is Nirākāra, especially so for the common people. In the Bhagavadgītā Kṛṣṇa says:

kleśodhikatarasteṣāṃ avyaktāsaktacetasām /
avyaktāhi gatirduḥkhaṃ dehavdbhiravāpyate // (42)

"Greater is their distress whose minds are set on the unmanifested, for the goal of the unmanifested is very difficult for the embodied to attain". Anybody - a learned or an unlettered man, healthy or sick person, rich or poor - anybody can approach 'sākāraparamātmā', a God given a form and so this path is known to be the easier way to reach the Lord. Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna

nāham vedairna tapasā na dānena na cejyayā /
sakya evaṃ vidho dṛṣṭuṃ dṛṣṭavānāsi mām yathā // (43)

"Neither by the Vedas nor by austerity nor by gifts, nor by sacrifice can I be seen as you have seen me".

bhaktyā tvananyayā śakyaḥ ahaṃ evaṃ vidho'rjuna / (44)

"But by single minded devotion I may in this form be attained". To seek the blessings of the Lord through love is not as difficult as it would be by either doing penance or through learning or by performing sacrifices.

Those who are very devoted to the Lord do not give much

42) B.G. XII-5

43) B.G. XI-53

44) B.G. XI-54a.

importance to the immediate results of their deeds, for to them mokṣa is serving the Lord with love (45), and that they consider the highest goal and result. One could become immersed in Him by taking pleasure in performing His worship and showing deep interest in affiliated activities. Without being disturbed by any other desires and attractions in the world and with a still mind one should meditate upon Him. This is Bhakti. This is the topmost step of love. When a man reaches this point he needs nothing of this world. The love that one develops towards worldly things seldom stays permanent, it rather changes as days pass. But such a love which is unchanged whatever the consequences might be is called real Bhakti.

Śāṇḍilya says that even without proper learning one can reach one's real goal, i.e. the feet of the Lord through Bhakti.

ata eva tadabhāvāt vallavīnām / (46)

"So even though they were unlettered, the Gopis attained Him".

The Forms of Bhakti.

Bhakti manifests in many ways : nine kinds to be precise, as the Bhagavatapurana has it. They are:

śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoḥ smaraṇam pādasevanam /
arcanam vandanam dāsyam sakhyamātmanivedanam //
iti puṁsārpitā viṣṇau bhaktiścennavaḥakṣaṇā /
kriyate bhagavatyaaddhā tanmanye'dhītamuttamam // (47)

"To hear of the glories of Viṣṇu, to praise them, to be absorbed in thoughts of Him, to wait upon Him, to worship Him, to make one's prostrations to Him, to be His dedicated servant, to look upon oneself as His friend, and to surrender oneself into His hands - if devotion to the Lord, which manifests itself in these

45) B.H.P. I-7-10

46) S.B.S. 14

47) B.H.P. VII-5-23, 24. Srimad Bhāgavatam

Tr. N. Raghunathan, Vol.2, p.596.

nine ways, were taught to the pupil, and he gave his disinterested devotion to the Lord even before he began expressing it in these various ways, that would indeed be the highest kind of learning".

Each of these nine types of Bhakti is capable of transcending the ignorance of man and taking him nearer to God. Again the Bhāgavata stresses that this Bhakti should be free from worldliness. The example that the Bhāgavata gives to show the greatness of such a devotion is that of the great sages. Lord Viṣṇu's greatness was such that though they had realised the self, and had learned all that was necessary, they show selfless Bhakti towards him. (48). The Bhāgavata stresses elsewhere "that alone is the highest dharma of men which is disinterested devotion towards God that is free from worldly weaknesses and by which the self rejoices".

sa vai puṁsām paro dharmo yato bhaktiradhokṣje /
ahaitukyapratihatā yayātmā samprasīdati // (49)

These nine aspects of Bhakti are :

Śravaṇa: Śravaṇa is listening; listening to the glory of the Lord. By listening one's mind fills with the greatness of the Lord and thus Śravaṇa cultiv^{at}es and turns it towards the Lord - detaching it from worldly things. The Gopis sing the name of the Lord calling it Śravaṇamaṅgalaṁ (50) "auspicious to hear" or "which brings eternal good to those who listen to it". The Harikathākālākṣepa and the Bhārata-Bhāgavata-Vācana which have survived even to this day are traditions which have come from the past several centuries may also be given as an example for this type of Bhakti.

Kīrtana: Kīrtana is singing the praise of the Lord. This is slightly different a way from that of Śravaṇa. In Śravaṇa somebody will sing or speak the glory of the Lord but here the man himself sings and praises the glory of the Lord and thus purifies himself.

48) B.H.P. I-7-10

49) B.H.P. I-2-6

50) B.H.P. X-31-9

Prahlāda and other devotees like Hanumān sang the greatness of the Lord and redeemed themselves of worldliness. 'The singer may or may not even be aware of the greatness of the name of the Lord yet it burns all his sins' - thus says the Bhagavata.

ajñānādathavā jñānāduttamaślokanāma yat /
saṅkīrtitamaghaṁ puṁso dahadedho yathānalah // (51)

Smarāṇa: Smarāṇa is recalling the Lord and seeing Him in one's mind. For this man needs practice. He has to drive away all other unwanted thoughts from his mind and make it ready to welcome the Lord. Concentration of mind is also a very important factor here. Thus Smarāṇa purifies one's mind by helping one to have control over one's self and to think and meditate upon the Lord. Unlike Śravaṇa and Kīrtana this is an internal activity by which one leads one's heart to Him. The following incident may serve as an example. In the Mahābhārata when Dūrvāsa, a famous sage, motivated by Duryodhana comes to the Pāṇḍavas in the forest, Draupadī had already washed the Akṣaya - vessel, and was now in great trouble for she had to serve the sage Dūrvāsa and his countless disciples. She knew who could help her at such a moment of great tension - so she remembered Him (Lord Kṛṣṇa) and instantly He was there to help her! Dhruva may also be taken as an example who becomes worthy of the Lord's blessings by repeating and meditating upon the Lord's name.

Pādasevana: This is serving the feet of the Lord. The feet of the Lord are very important to all those who worship God with form. There are quite a number of episodes connected with the feet of Kṛṣṇa (Viṣṇu).

51) B.H.P. VI-2-18. There is another verse to support this in the Bhāgavata which runs thus :

kṛte yat dhyāyato viṣṇuṁ tretāyām yajato makhaiḥ /
dvāpare paricaryāyām kalau taddharikīrtanam // B.H.P. XII-3-52.

"What people used to obtain in Kṛtayuga by meditating upon Viṣṇu, and in Tretāyuga by performing different kinds of sacrifice to please Him and in Dvāparayuga by serving Him, that they obtain in Kaliyuga by singing the praise of the Lord."

The Lord measured the whole universe with his feet; He gave the highest place to King Bali by pressing him by his feet to the nether world. It is through his feet only that the river goddess, Gaṅgā has come down to the earth. It is these feet that stamped out the wickedness in those who were proud and were engaged in destructive work. So in order to get rid of one's mind of impurities and in order to be worthy of His blessings serving the sacred feet of the Lord is also one of the ways. It is an act by which a man feels that he is nothing in this universe, and by which he develops humility and the ability to surrender to the Lord.

The Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa has this to say about the holy feet of the Lord:

carāṇaṃ pavitraṃ vitataṃ purāṇaṃ yena pūtastarati
duṣkṛtāni /
tena pavitreṇa śuddhena pūtā ati pāpmānaṃ aratiṃ
tarema // (52)

"He who is rendered holy by the ancient, widespread, sanctifying feet overcomes all the sinful and evil deeds and their effects. Having been rendered holy by that naturally pure and purifying feet of the Lord may we overcome our enemies, the sins". The art of service demands humility, consideration, selflessness and understanding, and these are the very qualities which elevate one's being from the baser levels to the higher levels, in short a proximity to the ultimate.

Arcana: Arcana is worshipping the Lord with devotion. In worshipping, offering whatever a man has with him is also implied; he should show his love for the Lord by offering whatever he has. The lord himself has said in the Bhagavadgītā:

yo yo yām yām tanuṃ bhaktaḥ śraddhyārcitum icchatī /
tasya tasyācalāṃ śraddhāṃ tāmeva vidadhāmyaham // (53)

"Whoever, in whichever form, want to worship me with interest and

52) Tai.B. III-12-3-4

53) B.G. VII-21.

love, to them I respond to the same extent and take them into me".

patraṃ puṣpaṃ phalaṃ toyaṃ yo me bhaktyā prayacchati /
tadahaṃ bhaktyupahṛtaḥ aśnāmi prayatātmanaḥ // (54)

"A leaf, a flower, a fruit or even a drop of water offered to me in the form worshipping with devotion, will I accept from a man who has understood me".

Thus Kṛṣṇa himself has said that he would take care of him who worships him with devotion and love. First one should surrender one's material objects to Him, only then one can surrender one's all to the Lord - thus becoming worthy of his love.

Vandana: This could be said as a part of Arcana or worship. Vandana is offering salutation to the Lord, subjugating one's self - This is prostrating one's self at the feet of the Lord symbolising one's complete surrender to Him.

Dāśya: This is the state of Bhakti when the devotee intensely feels his complete subordination forgetting his identity, conducts himself as a slave to the Lord and performs all his duties taking them to be the divine order. This is a way of leaving all the responsibility on Him while carrying one's duty. Thereby action (or service) is detached, without a motive of self-gain but dedicated to God. He finds happiness in serving the Lord in every respect. The great devotee Hanumān is a fine example for this type of Bhakti who considered himself a servant at the feet of his Lord Rāma. Tulsīdās, Sūrdās, Purandaradāsa of recent times are devotees of this order, with the suffix dās or dāsa added to their names denoting their relation to the Lord they serve.

Sakhya: When a man conducts himself as a friend of the Lord - such a relationship and such a type of love is called Sakhya-

Bhakti. Though the external relationship is friendship, internally

there is always the notion that the object of the friendship is the Lord and so Bhakti is behind such a relationship. Arjuna is the finest example for this. In the Gītā the Lord says

sa evāyaṃ mayā te'dya yogaḥ proktaḥ purātanaḥ /
bhaktō'si me sakhā ceti rahasyaṃ hyetaduttamam // (55)

Even the cowherds of the Gokula who played with Kṛṣṇa during his boyhood days are excellent examples of friendship. Their intimacy was so great that they felt very free to speak to Kṛṣṇa as a fellow-cowherd.

Ātmanivedana: This is complete surrender of one's self. It is the final stage of Bhakti where the devotee knows nothing but his own self given to the Lord. In this level he speaks to the Lord as if there is no difference between Him and himself. The Gopis in their final stage of love towards Lord Kṛṣṇa are the best examples of this type of Bhakti.

A close examination of the nine types of Bhakti reveals that they are all interconnected, for in all these one's mind is always engaged to the Lord.

The Expression of Devotion:

As the way of showing one's love or devotion towards God differs, so does the feeling, or emotion displayed towards one's Lord. The type of Bhakti - Bhaktirūpa is expressed through a Bhakti-Bhāva the conduct of that Bhakti. Bhāva is the way of conducting oneself and showing one's love and relation to the Lord. This again is classified into five divisions. They are Śānta, Dāsyā, Sakhya, Vātsalya and Madhura Bhāvas.

When a person detaches himself and having realised the Self enjoys in himself, without any desire or 'me' or 'mine' - such a state of mind may be termed Śānta - peaceful. He constantly meditates upon the Lord unaware of anything else. A Śānta is knowledgeable.

Dāsyabhāva is the same as Dāsyabhakti that has been dealt with in this chapter only. Here the devotee will consider himself a slave of the Lord. He respects and loves his Lord. He dances singing the glory of the Lord.

In the feeling of friendship with the Lord, the devotee can over-come the distance between him and the lord by the intimacy of friendship. Once again, Sakhyabhāva and Sakhyabhakti are almost synonymous.

When a devotee considers the Lord as his son or a small child and himself as his parent or an elderly person the love that arises in his mind towards the lord is called Vātsalyabhāva. This love is as strong as that of parents towards their children. Whether the child is well-behaved or not, to the parents it is their child and their love for the child is always there. Such a love does not expect anything from the child - but just pours itself out on the child. The love of Yaśodā, Nandagopa, Vasudeva, Devakī are of this kind.

Madhurabhāva is the stage when one becomes the lover of the Lord. In this relationship the devotee loves the Lord like a lover loves her beloved. Here there is a complete exchange of love between the two souls unlike the one found in the Vātsalyabhāva where it is perhaps somewhat one sided. Everything in life is shared here between the lover and the beloved. As love between two souls is the best aspect in the life of human beings this relationship between devotees and their lord is the best of all other relationships. The Gopis are the best examples for this kind of love.

Summary:

Thus, Bhakti that evolved from the profound expressions of the Vedas such as vand, upās, śraddh, bhaj, gradually took its exact form of bhakti in the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad, then developed

into one of the most prominent branches of Indian ethics during the time of the Ēpics (particularly after the teaching of the Bhagavad-gītā) and expressed itself in a refined manner during the time of the Bhāgavatapurāṇa. Then it grew from strength to strength in the hands of a great many devotees who offered themselves to spread it. Most of these devotees have dealt in detail ^{with} the Dāśya, Sakhya, Vātsalya and Madhurabhāvas. Bālakṛṣṇa being their object of worship - Vātsalya and Madhurabhāva, naturally gained prominence in their songs. Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa from Karnataka are two among such devotees of Kṛṣṇa and a study of their Vātsalya and Madhura songs on him are to be presented in this thesis.

6. THE EARLY LIFE OF KṚṢṆA AS FOUND IN THE MAJOR SOURCES.

With the popularity of the Bhagavadgītā, the theory of the incarnations became stronger and Lord Kṛṣṇa acquired the most prominent place of all the other incarnations of Lord Viṣṇu. The character of Kṛṣṇa with its diversity and its historical value rose to the peak and his declaration in the Gītā that he is the Lord of everything in this universe also added to this prominence. Kṛṣṇa's helping of the Pāṇḍavas who were in great difficulty, and ^{his} having agreed to be the charioteer of Arjuna, his delivering the greatest message to him at a time when Arjuna absolutely needed such timely advice, had their clear effect on the future generations. A clear proof of this is found even during the time of the Mahābhārata. It is significant to note that glorification of Kṛṣṇa is more in the post-Gītā chapters than the pre-Gītā chapters. This continued in the Harivaṃśa, the Viṣṇupurāṇa, the Bhāgavatapurāṇa and other such works. The main purpose of these later compositions was to uphold the path of devotion that gained momentum ever since the Gītā.

Lord Kṛṣṇa became the main object of such a love and its development. Since then the life and activities of Lord Kṛṣṇa became more symbolic and inspiring to all devotees and poets. This movement of bhakti that centred mainly around Kṛṣṇa later entered into the life of common people through the local languages. Thus, in India, one can find the story of Kṛṣṇa sung, told and retold in different languages from Kanyakumari to Kashmir and from Gujarat to Assam.

One could easily trace the roots of these songs, stories and tales and parables to the original. As Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa and other dāsas of Karnataka have mainly dealt with the boyhood aspect of Kṛṣṇa, an attempt is made here to present a short account of the early life of Kṛṣṇa as depicted in different important scriptures.

Kṛṣṇa in the Mahābhārata.

The Mahābhārata does not have any exact information regarding

the childhood and boyhood incidents of Kṛṣṇa, though it is here that one finds a full picture of Kṛṣṇa as an adult. Kṛṣṇa makes his first appearance only during the marriage of Draupadī. By that time he was already married and had children (1). Dhr̥ṣṭadyumna, brother of Draupadī, while introducing the kings and princes who were assembled for the Svayamvara, introduces Kṛṣṇa as well - but by his other name, Vāsudeva (2). But a little further on, the name of Kṛṣṇa appears in another verse (3).

The Pāṇḍavas were Kṛṣṇa's cousins. But only after the marriage of Draupadī, Kṛṣṇa draws closer to the Pāṇḍavas and he shares with them their hardships, thus becoming their intimate friend.

Kṛṣṇa was respected by many and also hated by some. Such great men as Bhīṣma accepting the divinity of Kṛṣṇa had asserted Kṛṣṇa's greatness even at that early stage of his life. Bhīṣma says "Kṛṣṇa is the origin of the universe and in Him the universe dissolves" (4). These aspects of Kṛṣṇa are revealed by Bhīṣma at the time of the discussion during the Rājasūya sacrifice when everybody looked to Bhīṣma to name one who is worthy of the highest honour in the sacrifice, and he suggests Kṛṣṇa's name, revealing Kṛṣṇa's great qualities. It is here that one comes across certain clues as to the boyhood incidents in Kṛṣṇa's life. Śiśupāla, Kṛṣṇa's arch-enemy abuses Kṛṣṇa, objecting to his eligibility for that day's prime worship. In his abuse there are such words as pūtanāghātaṁpūrvāṇi (5) and aśvavṛṣabhau (6), indicative of the incidents of Pūtanā, the demon Keśi and Vṛṣabhāsura that are later dealt in more detail in the

1) and 2) saṁkarṣaṇo vāsudevo raukmiṇeyaśca vīryavān M.B.H. I-177-16a.
"Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa and the mighty son of Rukmiṇi" (all have come O Draupadī).

3) prekṣāṁsma cakṣuryadupuṅgavāste sthitāśca kṛṣṇasya
mate babhūvuḥ / M.B.H. I-178-8b.

"The famous Yādavas who obeyed Kṛṣṇa were also there".

4) kṛṣṇa eva hi lokānām utpattirapi cāpyayaḥ / M.B.H. II-35-22a.

5) M.B.H. II-38-4a.

6) M.B.H. II-38-7b.

Harivaṁśa and other Purāṇas. A little further occur verses connecting the Śakatāsura and the Govardhana incidents.

Then in the court scene, the aftermath of the disastrous gamble in which the Pāṇḍavas lost, during which Draupadī was about to be humiliated, when she could not depend on anybody for help, she prays to Lord Kṛṣṇa calling him by these names: Govinda, Gopījanapriya and Vrajanātha (7) which connect him with the cows and cowherds of Vraja-Gokula. Thus these references, although very few in number, are indicative of the boyhood activities of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and, looking into them after a study of the Harivaṁśa or other Purāṇas would be more revealing. The author of the Mahābhārata knew the life of Kṛṣṇa but as his purpose was something else, namely the saga of the Kaurava dynasty, he did not go into the details of Kṛṣṇa's personal life at that stage of writing.

Kṛṣṇa's boyhood as described in the Harivaṁśa.

This book is considered a sequel to the Mahābhārata. As the very name indicates it is a treatise on the genealogy of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Here one finds a detailed account of Kṛṣṇa's boyhood for the first time.

The life of Kṛṣṇa starts in the Viṣṇuparva section of the Harivaṁśa. It begins with the gods requesting Viṣṇu to take birth on the earth to establish dharma, as there were then many wicked people like Kāṁsa, Śiśupāla, Dantavakra and others. Brahma even says gopakanyāsahasrāṇi ramayaṁścara medinīm (8). "Walk on earth delighting the 1000 Gopis", indicative of Kṛṣṇa's later relation with the Gopis in Gokula-Vraja. A little further he says:

viṣṇo padmapalāśākṣo gopālaṁvaśtīm gate /
bāle tvayi mahābāho loko bālatvameṣyati // (9)

"Lord - when you go and live among the cowherds as a boy, the whole

7) M.B.H. Vol.2, p.304 543* line 2 and 4.

8) H.V. 45-40b

9) H.V. 45-42

world will relive its boyhood. "

The princess Devakī is Kāṁsa's sister. By his demonic ways Kāṁsa, the king, proves to be very unpopular and tyrannical and it is one of the purposes of the Kṛṣṇa-incarnation to kill this demon. From divine predictions Kāṁsa is aware that his end lies in the hands of the eighth son of his sister Devakī. To safeguard himself he throws Devakī and her husband into a prison heavily guarded by his followers. His object is to seize the children as they are born and kill them. And he does so the seven times Devakī bears a child. At the time of Kṛṣṇa's birth many strange things happened and Vasudeva having seen the universal form of Lord Viṣṇu has to request Him to withdraw his divine form (10). Then Vasudeva takes the child to Gokula for safety and leaves it in the able hands of Nandagopa and Yaśodā to be taken care of (11). There Kṛṣṇa grows up happily. As an infant, he upturns a cart (the demon Śakaṭāsura) and also kills a demoness by name Pūtanā.

Balarāma was Kṛṣṇa's brother and son of Rohiṇī, Vasudeva's other consort. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were very alike and they always wore the same type of dress (12). The Harivaṁśa states that Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa were born as cowherds on this earth to protect Mother Earth (13). Both Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were very naughty and were mischievous and it was very difficult for others to control them. (14) So Yaśodā, in order to check Kṛṣṇa ties him to a mortar, and Kṛṣṇa

10) rūpaṁ saṁhara vai prabho / H.V. Vol.1, p. 331 - 602* line 1

11) sā purī mathurā sarvā suśvāpa harimāyayā / H.V. Vol.1, p 331 - 604* line 3

"(At that time) the whole city of Mathurā was fast asleep under the spell of the Lord".

12) ekaveśadharau ; ekādehau dvidhākṛtau / H.V. 51-3b and 4a.

13) kṛtsnasya jagataḥ gopau saṁvṛtau gopadārakau / H.V. 51-5b.

14) atiprasaktau tau dṛṣṭvā sarvavrajavicāriṇau /
nāśaknuvadvārayitum nandagopaḥ sudurmadau // H.V. 51-12.

pulling the mortar fells two trees. Later Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma became real cowherds when they were around seven years old (15). They were melodiously playing certain mouth instruments made of the leaves of plants. The Harivaṁśa states that both Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa were experts in playing the cowherd flute.

The villagers eventually leave Vraja and set out for Vṛndāvana. Here Kṛṣṇa comes to know of the deep waters where Kāliya, the poisonous serpent lived and wants to rid the river of poison. He says "I have to punish this king of serpents so that this river becomes free from poison" (16). Kṛṣṇa punishes the Kāliya serpent. Around the same time Balarāma kills a demon called Pralamba.

Then comes the incident of the Indra-sacrifice where the major portion of the sacrifice was to be offered to Indra. But Kṛṣṇa stops this ransom once and for all. He asks the elders "who is this (who is) known as Śakra? (17) and continues "We are cowherds living in the forest with cows as our wealth. Cows are our deities as well as the mountains and the forests." (18). Kṛṣṇa goes further and emphasises, "if you love me - if we all value good in this world, cows are the ones to be revered and we should worship them" (19). All the villagers agree to Kṛṣṇa's words and they perform the sacrifice accordingly. They were even ready to worship little Kṛṣṇa. They say tvatkṛete kṛṣṇa ghoṣo'yam (20). "Kṛṣṇa - this village is for you". Kṛṣṇa in the form of the Govardhana mountain accepts their

15) nīlapītāmbaṛadharau pītaśvetānulepanau /
babhūvaturvatsapālau kākapaṅśadharāvubhau // H.V. 52-2

16) tadasya sarparājasya kartavyo nigrāho mayā /
yatheyaṁ saridambhodā bhavecchivajalāśayā // H.V. 55-54

17) ko'yam śakramāho nāma? / H.V. 59-3b

18) vayaṁ vanacarā gopa gopā godhanajīvinah /
gāva'smaddaivatam viddhi girayaśca vanāni ca // H.V. 59-20

19) H.V. 59-60b and 61a.

20) H.V. 60-4a.

offerings. Indra gets angry and is brought back to normal by Kṛṣṇa breaking his pride.

In the meantime, Kṛṣṇa's cowherd friends and others are already bewildered at his strange deeds and had their own doubts regarding Kṛṣṇa, looking at his humanly impossible deeds. They ask Him: "We see your superhuman deeds such as lifting the mountain, killing the demons; your strength in such boyhood, your birth in this cursed village amongst us, as well as your divine actions, all these create doubt in our mind. Whoever you are, a God, a demon, a Gandharva, a Yakṣa or whosoever you are, you have become our relative and a friend - we salute you" (21). This was their feeling about Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇa was a darling to all the Gopis in Vṛndāvana. They liked playing with Kṛṣṇa and their relationship was a very intimate one. Their love (though there were some who were married) towards Kṛṣṇa was such that they even ignored the objections of their fathers, mothers and brothers and went in search of Kṛṣṇa:

tā vāryamāṇā pitṛbhir-mātṛbhir-bhrātṛbhistathā /
kṛṣṇam gopāṅganā rātrau mṛgayanti ratipriyāḥ // (22)

Later Kṛṣṇa kills a demon called Aṛiṣṭa. By this time, Kāṁsa who had watched the activities going on in Vṛndāvana, and the death of his people, sends Akrūra to bring Kṛṣṇa on some pretext.

Akrūra sets forth for his journey to Vṛndāvana. In the meantime Kṛṣṇa kills the demon Keśi - known to be a man-eater. Akrūra comes to Vṛndāvana. Himself being a great admirer and a devotee of

21) amānuṣāṇi karmāṇi tava paśyāma gopate /
dhāraṇenāsyā śailasya vidmastvām kṛṣṇamavyayam //
vane ca bālakṛīdā te janma cāsmāsu garhitam /
kṛṣṇa divyā ca te ceṣṭāḥ śaṅkitāni manāṁsi naḥ //
devo vā dānavo vā tvam yakṣo gandharva eva vā /
asmākaṁ bāndhavo jāto yo'si so'si namo'stute // H.V. 63-4,6 and 8

22) H.V. 63-24.

the Lord, he was all too happy to come to take Kṛṣṇa away with him. He speaks of Kṛṣṇa in a verse which turns out to be prophetic. "Kṛṣṇa wins kingdoms - distributing them to the right people, never does he become king himself but stays above all of them" (23). This truth is revealed in the life of Kṛṣṇa. Akrūra explains to Nandagopa and others the purpose of his coming as well as the plight of Vasudeva and Devakī. Perhaps only because of this do Nandagopa and Yaśodā agree without much persuasion to part with Kṛṣṇa.

As Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma depart for Mathurā with Akrūra, on their way, they kill a washerman for his arrogance and bless a good-natured flower merchant. Afterwards they come across a hunch-backed woman who shows them kindness. Kṛṣṇa blesses her by bestowing on her a perfect form. She promptly falls in love with Kṛṣṇa and requests him to take her! Kṛṣṇa tells her that he would visit her later. He and Balarāma kill the elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa, two wrestlers of Kāṁsa, and finally Kṛṣṇa jumps on to the throne where Kāṁsa was sitting and dragging the latter to the ground, beheads him, relieving the world of one of the worst evil men. Vasudeva and Devakī who were watching Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma with fear finally meet their sons. This is the account of Kṛṣṇa's boyhood as found in the Harivaṁśa.

Kṛṣṇa's boyhood in the Viṣṇupurāṇa.

The discussion below reiterates Kṛṣṇa's life as depicted in the Harivaṁśa but with some differences in the emphasis given to the Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa equivalence and the sequence of his story.

The Viṣṇupurāṇa attaches more divinity to Kṛṣṇa than does the Harivaṁśa. The story is the same as that handled in the

23) ayamāsthāya vasudhām sthāpayitvā jagdvaśe /
rājñām bhaviṣyatyupari na ca rājā bhaviṣyati //
H.V. 68-31.

Harivaṁśa with some modifications here and there to bring out much more glorification to Kṛṣṇa's life as the divine Viṣṇu.

In the Harivaṁśa, the divine minstrel Nārada speaks on behalf of the gods and requests Viṣṇu to incarnate on earth to lessen her burden. In the Viṣṇupurāṇa it is the primordial Brahma who speaks for earth on behalf of all the gods requesting Viṣṇu to redeem the world from the hands of such evil souls as Kāṁsa and others. One can see the Vedic and Upaniṣadic sayings reflected in Brahma's prayers to Viṣṇu.

śṛṇoṣyakarṇaḥ paripaśyasi tvam acakṣureko baturūparūpaḥ/
āpādahasto javano grhītā tvam vetsi sarvaṁ na ca
sarvavedyaḥ // (24)

"You hear without ears and see without eyes, you are one and many. You move without feet and hold without hands and you know all and are not known by all."

ekaṁ tvamagryaṁ paramaṁ padaṁ yat paśyanti tvāṁ
sūrayo jñānadrśyāṁ /
tvatto nānyat kiñcidasti svarūpaṁ yadvā bhūtaṁ
yacca bhavyaṁ parātman // (25)

"You are the only highest abode, that which is always sought by the learned through their eyes of knowledge. There is, there was and there will be no entity apart from you, O highest soul".

When Kṛṣṇa was born the whole city of Mathurā was under the spell of Lord Viṣṇu. Vasudeva, out of fear had to request the Lord to hide his Viṣṇu-form so that nobody comes to know of this. Vasudeva was able to take Him from the prison and exchange Him with the daughter of Yaśodā, from the village of Gokula across the river Yamunā. Vasudeva remained unnoticed due to the divine spell cast by the Lord. Here also as in the Harivaṁśa Nanda the cowherds' leader, had come to Mathurā to pay his tax to Kāṁsa at the time of Kṛṣṇa's birth.

24) V.P. V-1-40. cf Sv.U. III-19

25) V.P. V-1-45. cf. R.V. I-22-20 and R.V. X-90-3.

The Pūtanā and Śakaṭa incident occur in the opposite order from that observed in the Harivaṃśa. When Kṛṣṇa killed Pūtanā, Yaśodā performed an act of ritual for warding off evil eyes by fanning the child with a cow's tail (26).

Soon both Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma become tiny little boys crawling all over the house, walking with their faltering steps. They already are launched on their pranks. Both the little ones would hold the tail of the newly born calves and pull it!

tadaharjātagovatsapucchākarṣaṇatatarau / (27)

Unable to control them Yaśodā tied Kṛṣṇa to the mortar. Soon after this incident the villagers go to Vṛndāvana and only thereafter do Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa become real cowherds (28). "They had put the peacock feathers on their head as crests and were bedecked by forest flowers and were playing on cowherd flutes and instruments made of leaves of plants. Their hair was decorated with the wings of a crow, they looked like the children of the God of war and they were wandering in that big forest smiling and playing"(29).

The Kāliya incident is almost the same as that of the Hari-vaṃśa. In both these works Kṛṣṇa states that he has taken birth on

26) ādāya kṛṣṇaṃ santrastā yaśodāpi dvijottama /
gopucchabhramaṇenātha bāladoṣamapākarot // V.P. V-5-12.

"O great brahmin, the frightened Yaśodā, holding Kṛṣṇa,
(in her hands) removed the bad omen by waving the tail of
a cow in front of the child".

27) V.P. V-6-12b.

28) sarvasya jagataḥ pālau vatsapālau babhūvatuḥ / V.P. V-6-35b.
"The protectors of the universe became the protectors
of the cows".

29) barhipatrakṛtāpīdau vanyapuṣpāvatamsakau /
gopavenukṛtātodyapatravādyakṛtasvanau //
kākapakṣadharau bālau kumārāviva pāvakī /
hasantau ca ramantau ca ceratuḥ sma mahāvanam //
V.P. V-6-32 and 33.

earth to punish such wicked creatures as Kāliya (30). In his fight with Kāliya, Kṛṣṇa was bitten by the serpent and was unconscious and Balarāma had to come to remind Him of his divinity. Balarāma says "What is this, O Lord of Lords, these mortal emotions in you!" (31). "Enough of this human pretence and enough of this childish prank! Kṛṣṇa, punish this wicked, fang-weaponed serpent" (32). The influence of the Harivaṃśa is clearly seen here. But the religious ideas have been given further prominence and what is recorded in one verse in the Harivaṃśa is treated in the Viṣṇupurāṇa in many more verses.

Then there is the story of how Balarāma killed the demon Dhenuka (who came in the form of an ass) and Pralamba. There is an interesting point here. In both the Viṣṇupurāṇa and Harivaṃśa it is Kṛṣṇa's turn at this point to remind Balarāma of his power and strength to kill Pralamba (33). Thus at regular intervals the reader is made aware of the divinity of both Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa.

During the Indra-sacrifice, as in the Harivaṃśa, here also Kṛṣṇa asks, "What is this Indra-Sacrifice?" (34), convinces the villagers that they should worship the hill, cows and the forests to which they owe their living, not Indra (35). Indra gets angry when he is not offered what was his usual share, and his pride is broken by Kṛṣṇa. Indra realises that Kṛṣṇa is the supreme self and comes and offers his salutations.

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- 30) etadartham tu loke'smin avatāraḥ kṛto mayā /
yadeṣāmutpatasthānām kāryā śāntirdurātmanām // V.P. V-7-9
cf. etadartham ca vāso'yaṃ vraje'smin gopajanma ca /
amīṣāmutpatasthānām śāsanārtham durātmanām // H.V. 55-56
- 31) kimidaṃ devadeveśa bhāvo'yaṃ mānuṣastvayā? V.P. V-7-35a.
- 32) darśito mānuṣo bhāvo darśitaṃ bālacāpalam /
tadayaṃ danyatāṃ kṛṣṇa duṣṭātmā daśanāyudhaḥ // V.P. V-7-42
- 33) V.P. V-9-23 to 33, cf. H.V. 58-34 to 49
- 34) ko'yaṃ śakramakho nāma? V.P. V-10-18b.
- 35) gāvo'smaddaivatam tāta vayaṃ vanacarā yataḥ / V.P. V-10-26b.

"As we are cowherds (farmers) the cows are our objects of worship." cf. H.V. 59-20.

The cowherds were astonished and amazed at the things that were happening. They could not imagine how Kṛṣṇa could do such deeds. These words that they speak as already seen in the Harivaṁśa, are indicative of their innocent, and affectionate nature. They say "Whether you are a divine being or a demon or a Yakṣa or a Gandharva what does it matter to us? You have become our relative, we salute you" (36).

At this point of the narration of the Viṣṇupurāṇa diverts from the Harivaṁśa in the emphasis given to the Rāsa Dance. This dance is held on the night of a full moon on the banks of the river Yamunā in the forest. As Kṛṣṇa was incomparable in charm, love, strength, the Gopis could not resist their desire to play with Him on such a night. They happily spent a long time until Kṛṣṇa disappears for a while. Then the Gopis enact the life of Kṛṣṇa, each one in turn taking Kṛṣṇa's part (37). Their love for Him was such that they never listen to their husbands, parents, or brothers (38). The Viṣṇupurāṇa gives a very good account how Kṛṣṇa played with the Gopis without hurting the feelings of their husbands: "The killer of the enemies, the supreme soul, Kṛṣṇa played with them on those nights. He was in them, as well as in their husbands and in every being in the form of individual souls, like Vāyu is present everywhere" (39). The Rāsalīlā episode is shorter in the Harivaṁśa than in the Viṣṇupurāṇa. (The Viṣṇupurāṇa - around 50 verses, Harivaṁśa around 18 verses).

36) devo vā dānavo vā tvam yakṣo gandhrva eva vā /
kiṁasmākaṁ vicāreṇa bāndhavo'si namo'stute // V.P. V-13-8

37) V.P. V-13 (Chapter), Verse 15 onwards.

38) tā vāryamāṇāḥ patibhiḥ pitṛbhirbhrātrbhistathā /
kṛṣṇaṁ gopāṅganā rātrau ramayante ratipriyāḥ // V.P. V-13-59

"Though they were being stopped by their husbands, parents and brothers, they went with Kṛṣṇa out of their love to him".

39) reme tābhirameyātmā kṣapāsu kṣapitāhitaḥ /
tadbhartrṣu tathā tāsu sarvabhūteṣu ceśvaraḥ /
ātmasvarūparūpo'sau vyāpī vāyuriva sthitaḥ // V.P. V-13-60b and 61.

As before, after the killing of Ariṣṭāsura (a demon in the form of a bull) and Keśi (a demon in the form of a horse), Kāṁsa is now convinced that Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma are the ones who are destined to end his life. So he plans to kill them in his city, and, under a certain pretext, sends Akrūra to bring them.

In the Viṣṇupurāṇa, Akrūra does not speak much, but Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma themselves straightaway agree to go with him. It is strange that the Harivaṁśa does not mention anything about the Gopis and the people of Vṛndāvana when Kṛṣṇa left for Mathurā. We see the reaction of the innocent villagers for the first time in the Viṣṇupurāṇa. No sooner do they come to know of the arrival of Akrūra to take Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma to Mathurā, than their heart broke. They expressed their feelings in several ways:

mathurām prāpya govindaḥ katham gokulameṣyati? (40)

"Having reached the city of Mathurā, how will Kṛṣṇa ever return to Gokula?"

cittamasya katham bhūyo grāmya gopīṣu yāsyati? (41)

"How can his mind ever turn back to the village Gopis (cowherd girls)?"

"Ill fate, by taking away Hari, the essence of the whole village, has given a deadly blow to the hearts of the Gopis" (42). "See - O my God! here, here Kṛṣṇa ascending the chariot is going to Mathurā led by the cruel and wicked Akrūra" (43). "They are taking away Hari - the apple of our eyes" (44); and it is difficult even to

40) V.P. V-18-14a.

41) V.P. V-18-15b.

42) sāraṁ samastagoṣṭhasya vidhinā haratā harim /
prahṛtaṁ gopayoṣitsu nirghṛṇena durātmanā // V.P. V-18-16

43) eṣaisa rathamāruhya mathurām yāti keśavaḥ /
krūreṇākrūrakeṇātra nirghṛṇena pratāritaḥ // V.P. V-18-19

44) akṣṇorāhlādaṁ nayatyanyatra no harim / V.P. V-18-20b.

imagine their pitiable condition. They were crying : "Why, nobody ever tries to stop Kṛṣṇa from going" (45). Finally they were left only with His memory - and the Viṣṇupurāṇa has captured the whole essence of Kṛṣṇa as far as the Gopis are concerned in the following line:

tatyāja vrajabhūbhāgaṃ saha rāmeṇa keśavaḥ / (46)

"With Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa left for ever the land of Vraja"; tatyāja a very strong verb suggestive of the fact that Kṛṣṇa left never to come back! On the way to Mathurā, Kṛṣṇa shows his divine form to Akrūra. He kills the arrogant washerman and blesses the hunch-backed woman for she offers him incense with love. As in the Harivaṃśa, here also she did not let Kṛṣṇa go until he agreed to visit her. The other incidents are similar to those recounted in the Harivaṃśa.

^{early}
The life of Kṛṣṇa as found in the Bhāgavatapurāṇa.

Mother earth could not bear the wicked Daitya kings and so she requested Brahma to lessen her burden. Brahma followed by other gods went to Viṣṇu. There a voice from the sky assures them that Viṣṇu would incarnate himself in the form of a human being and would redeem mother earth from her burden. The voice asked the gods also to take their respective roles as human beings to please the Lord.

On an auspicious day in the prison, Kṛṣṇa was born when the whole world was calm and everywhere there were auspicious omen. Here it is Devakī rather than Vasudeva who first requests the Lord to withdraw his universal form (47). Vasudeva takes the babe out to safety as the whole world was under the Lord's spell. Nobody

45) nodyamaṃ kurute kaścit govinda vinivartane / V.P. V-18-23b.

46) V.P. V-18-32b.

47) upasaṃhara viśvātman ado rūpamalaukikam / B.H.P. X-3-30a.

"O universal soul, please withdraw that supernatural (unusual) form".

noticed him. He exchanges the boy with the baby girl just then born to Yaśodā and Nandagopa in Gokula, across the river Yamunā.

The Pūtanā episode is given a slightly different form from the same episode as described in the Viṣṇupurāṇa and the Harivaṃśa. As the Bhāgavata puts it, Pūtanā, after her death, attained the destiny of the pious, though with the intention of killing Him, she had given milk to the Lord (48). The author of the Bhāgavata instantly states: "How much easier and more sublime should a redemption be to those affectionate mothers who offer their all with love and devotion (instead of an intention to kill) to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the supreme spirit" (49).

Yaśodā's warding off the evil spirits by observing certain rituals is similar in both the Viṣṇupurāṇa and the Bhāgavata. The breaking of the cart (Śakaṭa) and the killing of the demon who came in the form of a whirlwind (50) are the incidents that follow the death of Pūtanā. In the Bhāgavatapurāṇa time and again there are references to Yaśodā breast-feeding Kṛṣṇa. This has never been mentioned either in the Harivaṃśa or the Viṣṇupurāṇa. Quoting from every day rustic life, it is in the Bhāgavatapurāṇa that Kṛṣṇa, as a village urchin, is connected with all exploits like stealing milk and butter, and taking the breast-milk of other women. It is important to note that such a natural aspect in the life of a child is made use of in the Bhāgavatapurāṇa unlike the more solemn treatment of the subject in the Viṣṇupurāṇa and the Harivaṃśa.

The incident of Yaśodā seeing the whole universe in the

48) jighāṃsayāpi haraye stanam datvāpa sadgatim / B.H.P. X-6-35b.

49) kiṃ punaḥ śraddhayā bhaktyā kṛṣṇāya paramātmāne /
yacchan priyatamaṃ kinu raktāstanmātaro yathā // B.H.P.X-6-36

50) This incident is missing in both the Harivaṃśa and the Viṣṇupurāṇa.

mouth of the little boy is also an additional contribution of the Bhāgavata (51). Soon Kṛṣṇa grows older and now both Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma have started crawling and kneeling all over the house. The love of mothers, when they see their little ones, their expressions, etc., have been depicted in an unparalleled way in the Bhāgavata. These aspects of Kṛṣṇa's life that became very popular in the post-Bhāgavata period are not found in such abundance in either of the previous works that are mentioned. The following verse depicts the happiness of a mother:

" Their mothers, whose breasts streamed with milk in the tenderness of their love, would hug them,so delightful with the sandal paste and the mire on them, and suckling them, would gaze, as they greedily drank, at their faces with the innocent smile and the little teeth partly showing, and go into raptures (52)". The effect of such numerous verses which are full of naturalness with divine beauty are found scattered all over in the post-Bhāgavata Vaiṣṇava literature.

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were very mischievous. They would follow the calves holding their tails. These and other such boyish pranks are depicted quite elaborately in the Bhāgavata (53). Here only one comes across the instance of little Kṛṣṇa stealing butter, milk and other such eatables in the houses of Gokula (This also has not found an expression in both the previous works). A few verses to show Kṛṣṇa's mischievous behaviour will not be out of context. "At times he would release the calves to their mothers at odd hours and if the

51) B.H.P. X-7-35, 36 and 37.

52) tanmātaru nijasutau ghrṇayā snuvantyaṁ,
pañkāṅgarāgṛucirāvupaguhya dorbhyām /
datvā stanam prapibatoḥ sma sukhāṁ nirīkṣya,
mugdhasmitālpaḍasanam yaytuḥ pramodam // B.H.P. X-8-23.

Srimad Bhāgavatam, Tr. N.Raghunathan, Vol.II, p.191.

53) B.H.P. X-8 (Chapter)

house keeper became angry, he, deriving pleasure out of this, would using his thievish tricks steal sweet curds and milk and eat them. He offered them to the monkeys and if they refused them he would break the pots. If he did not get whatever he wanted, angrily he would cause children to cry and would run away. When the Gopis were engaged in their household duties, if he was unable to reach things kept high with his bare hands, he would find a way to reach them by placing wooden planks, the mortar etc., one on top of the other. Knowing what was kept in the suspended pots, he would make holes in them. In the dark room, he could see all around him through the light shed by the jewels and pearls that bedecked him. Behaving in this way, he even forgot himself in the houses. Having caused all these troubles here he is (near you) looking the very picture of innocence. Even though these were reported to Yaśodā by the gopis who were looking at the beautiful face of Kṛṣṇa whose eyes were full of tears out of fear, she smiled at him and did not feel like punishing him" (54). Thus was he uncontrollable.

After this, the Bhāgavata has the mud-eating incident of his life once more: Kṛṣṇa again shows the universe hidden in his mouth to his mother. Yaśodā was startled when she saw this. Kṛṣṇa

54) vatsān muñcan kvacidasmaye kroṣasañjātahūsaḥ ,
steyaṃ svādvatyatha dadhipayaḥ kalpitaiḥ steyayogaiḥ /
markān bhokṣyan vibhajati sa cennāsti bhāṇḍaṃ bhinatti ,
dravyālābhe sa gṛhakupito yātyupakroṣya tokān //
hastāgrahye racayati vidhiṃ pīṭhakoḽkhalādyais- ,
chidraṃ hyantarnihitavayunaḥ śikyabhāṇḍeṣu tadvit /
dhvāntāgāre dhṛtamaṇigaṇaṃ svāṅgamarthapradīpam,
kāle gopyo yarhi gṛhakṛtyeṣu suvyagracittāḥ //
evaṃ dhārṣṭyānyuśati kurute mehanādīni vāstau ,
steyopāyairviracitakṛtiḥ supratīko yathāste /
itthaṃ strībhiḥ sabhayanayaṇaśrīmukhālokinībhir
vyākhyātārthā prahasitamukhī nahyupālabbdhumaicchat //
B.H.P. X-8-29, 30 and 31.

found that she was losing her motherly feeling, falling instead prey to awe at his divine power. This he did not want to happen. So suddenly he spread his māyā and soon Yaśodā was her natural self and she hugged her son (55). Had Yaśodā been made to lose her motherly love to awe because of her child's divine wonders, it would have been a great loss to the world. It is very rare to find literature that has depicted the relationship of a mother and her little one as vividly as seen in the Bhāgavatapurāṇa.

The incident that resulted in Yaśodā tying Kṛṣṇa to a mortar is also slightly changed in the Bhāgavatapurāṇa. Kṛṣṇa was feeding from his mother when she had to get up to remove the vessel from the hearth to prevent milk from boiling over. Kṛṣṇa did not like this disturbance and so crossly he broke the butter-milk pot and, sitting on a mortar, distributed the fresh butter to the monkeys. In order to punish him for this prank, Yaśodā tied him to the same mortar with much difficulty. At this point the author sings in ecstasy the glory of the Lord: "He, the one who has neither within nor without, has no past and no future, and, who is within, and without, who is the past and future of the world, and the very world itself Him, Adhokṣaja, the unmanifested one who took form as a human being, the Gopi tied to a mortar as an ordinary child!" (56). "The Gopi took such a Kṛṣṇa, whose glory was praised by the Vedas, the Upaniṣads, the Sāṅkya^h, the Yoga and other devotional texts to be her son" (57). In all the three works, little boys of Kṛṣṇa's age say that it was Kṛṣṇa who felled the twin trees but that

55) B.H.P. X-8-37 to 43.

56) na cāntarna bahiryasya na pūrvaṃ nāpi cāparaṃ /
pūrvāparaṃ bahiścāntarjagato yo jagacca yaḥ //
taṃ mattvātmajamavyaktaṃ martyaliṅgamadhokṣajam /
gopikṣolūkhale dāmnā babandha prākṛtaṃ yathā //

B.H.P. X-9-13 and 14.

57) B.H.P. I-8-45

the elders do not believe them (58).

Kṛṣṇa's playing with the Gopis is very well depicted in the Bhāgavatapurāṇa, the influence of which is seen in all future Bhakti literature. He danced to the tunes of the Gopis: "Some times the Lord danced like a little boy, induced by the gopis. Some times he would sing aloud to their tunes innocently like a toy. Being ordered by the gopis to bring a stool or a measure, he would bring them holding them on his head or shoulders, and while doing so he would also swing his arms bringing delight to his own people. Thus he demonstrated to the world his subordination to his devotees. Thus the Lord brought great joy to the people of Vraja by his childhood pranks" (59).

As the villagers found Vṛndāvana to be safer than Vraja, they migrated there. On their way they were all singing the pranks of Kṛṣṇa. (The incident where Brahma snatches away the cows and cowherds of Vṛndāvana and where Kṛṣṇa creates their replica is not available in either of the previous works. The Bhāgavatapurāṇa depicts that Brahma was eventually forced to accept Kṛṣṇa's supremacy (60)).

Kṛṣṇa's playing with the cowherds in the forest has been elaborately treated here. The Purāṇa also says that Kṛṣṇa found the deep waters where Kāliya lived were impure, seeking to cleanse that place he drove away the serpent Kāliya (61). In doing so Balarāma does not have to remind Kṛṣṇa of his greatness as he knew

58) B.H.P. X-11-4 and 5.

59) gopībhiḥ stobhito'nṛtyad bhagavān bālavat kvacit /
udgāyati kvacinmugdhastadvaśo dāruyantravat //
bibharti kvacidājñaptaḥ pīṭhakonmānapādukam /
bāhukṣepaṃ ca kurute svānāṃ ca prītimāvahan //
darśayamṣtadvidāṃ loka ātmano bhrtyavaśyatām /
vrajasyovāḥ vai harṣaṃ bhagavān bālaceṣṭitaiḥ // B.H.P. X-11-7, 8 & 9

60) B.H.P. X-13 and 14 (Chapters)

61) B.H.P. X-16-1

that Kṛṣṇa was just playing. So he stands on the bank smiling (62). After killing Pralamba, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma played quite a lot with their friends.

The love of the Gopis towards Kṛṣṇa their darling was such that they would find it most difficult to spend their time without him. "The very sight of Govinda would make the gopis absolutely happy. Without him, every second would appear as unending to them"(63). Such was their attachment to Kṛṣṇa. Now it was the final stage of the rainy season. A cool breeze with the fragrance of lovely forest flowers would fill the whole village and it was time for Kṛṣṇa to play his flute. The author of the Bhāgavata calls such an enchanting melody of Kṛṣṇa's flute venugītaṁ smarodayam (64). "The sound of the flute that kindles love in one's heart". The gopis went to their friends describing the melody of Kṛṣṇa's flute which kindled love in their hearts.

As one of the expressive arts, music finds an integral place in the episodes of Kṛṣṇa's life. Kṛṣṇa knew the tunes that were resonating in every heart, and that is why, when he played on his flute, not only human beings, but even animals and inanimate objects would show their reaction in one way or another. This aspect of Kṛṣṇa's life has been dealt with in superb manner in the Bhāgavata-purāṇa: " The one with the gracious form of a supreme actor, with a peacock feather in his hair, a karnikāra flower on his ear, with a beautiful dress of the colour of molten gold, and putting on a Vaijayantī garland, filling the gaps of his flute by the nectar of his lips, being followed by a band of gopas who sang his glory

62) B.H.P. X-16-16

(In Y.P. and H.V. Balarāma reminds Kṛṣṇa of his divinity at this point).

63) B.H.P. X-20-16

64) B.H.P. X-21-3a.

entered the forest of Vṛndāvana charmed by his foot prints" (65).

"O king, hearing the melody of Kṛṣṇa's flute, which literally stole away every heart, the gopis of Vraja enjoyed it sharing their happiness with each other" (66). In the above verse the word

sarvabhūtamanoḥaram "which ravished the hearts of all creatures" is purposefully used so as to bring home the point that animate and inanimate objects of the world equally responded to Kṛṣṇa's music. The Bhāgavatapurāṇa devotes a whole chapter to give a picture of what happened in the world when the Lord played on his flute.

The gopis utter in their ecstasy of joy:

akṣanvatām phalamidaṃ na param vidāmaḥ / (67)

"This is the reward for those who have eyes and we do not find anything which is greater than this". This is one of the most sought-after episodes of Kṛṣṇa's life, that has hypnotised His devotees; the sound of the music of His flute is still resounding in the hearts of His worshippers.

Soon after this episode comes the chapter where is described the incident of Kṛṣṇa's stealing away the clothes of the gopis. This, he did to test the depth of their love. When he found them sincere in their pursuit of love, he blessed them with his company. The incident treated in the Bhāgavatapurāṇa may be metaphorical: the damsels stripped their clothes and plunged into the lake thinking no one was around. No-one else was there but the Lord.

65) barhāpīdaṃ natavaravapuḥ karṇayoḥ karṇikāram
bibhradvāsaḥ kanakakapiśaṃ vaijayantīm ca mālām /
randhrān veṇoradharasudhayā pūrayan gopavṛndaiḥ
vṛndāranyaṃ svapadaramaṇaṃ prāviśad gītakīrtiḥ //
B.H.P. X-21-5.

66) iti veṇuravaṃ rājan sarvabhūtamanoḥaram /
śrutvā vrajastriyaḥ sarvā varṇayantyo'bhiremire //
B.H.P. X-21-6

67) B.H.P. X-21-7a

From him the omnipotent no-one can hide; to him everyone is exposed.

Kṛṣṇa says:

na mayyāveśitadhiyām kāmāḥ kāmāya kalpate /
bharjitā kvathitā dhāna prāyo bijāya neṣyate // (68)

"The love of those who have placed their mind (heart) on me is never considered an ordinary worldly love. Grain properly boiled and fried hardly functions like ordinary grain". Desire for Kṛṣṇa does not necessarily lead to excessive physical desire, for he is the very goal of life.

The Bhāgavata insists that Kṛṣṇa's personality was such and relates that even the wives of brahmins followed him, neglecting the orders of their husbands. It states:

abhisasruḥ priyaṁ sarvāḥ samudramiva nimnagāḥ //
niṣidhyamānā patibhirbhrātrbhirbandhubhiḥ sutaiḥ / (69)

"They all marched towards their beloved Lord like rivers flowing towards the ocean, though being stopped by their husbands, brothers, relatives and children". Such statements raise an ambiguity as to the divine role of Kṛṣṇa unless analysed with discretion.

During the Indra-Yajña episode, Kṛṣṇa addresses his elders thus: "This is my opinion and if you like it, please follow me. This sacrifice will be dear to the cows, the brahmins, the hills and to me (70)". Thereby he stops the villagers from worshipping Lord Indra. He breaks Indra's pride by lifting the Govardhana hill when Indra lets loose a thunder storm to intimidate the innocent villagers. Later Indra prays to him addressing him by his more exalted names:

namastubhyaṁ bhagavate puruṣāya mahātmane /
vāsudevāya kṛṣṇāya sāttvatām pataye namaḥ // (71)

68) B.H.P. X-22-26

69) B.H.P. X-23-19a and 20b.

70) B.H.P. X-24-30

71) B.H.P. X-27-10

"Salutations to thee, the glorious Lord Kṛṣṇa That art Immanent Spirit and yet illimitably vast, to Thee That art Vasudeva (in whom all things abide), and the Lord of the Satvatas (72)". In the next chapter Kṛṣṇa rescues his father from the realm of Varuṇa. The famous Rāsa-līlā chapter starts at this juncture.

The autumnal nights were so wonderful that Kṛṣṇa wanted to play with the Gopis. So he started playing on his flute and the captivating tune hypnotised all the Gopis and they started following the sound, unable to suppress their love for him. The poet while singing the glory and attraction of his flute, avers: "Those who were engaged in milking the cows, stopped and left fast in their eagerness (to see him), some others who were placing milk for boiling on the oven left half way, while others leaving the wheat flour uncooked on the hearths followed him. Some who were serving food (to their family members) left it half way and ran, a few others who were breast-feeding their babies left them aside and went; many who were attending to their husbands, others who were having their food all left, their duties unfinished. Some who were decorating their bodies stopped it half way and ran, some others who were bathing, who were painting their eyes with collyrium, who were getting dressed and decorated with ornaments, in a disorderly way, all left for Kṛṣṇa. Though they were prevented by their husbands, parents, brothers and relatives, they did not return having had their souls stolen by Govinda. Certain Gopis, who were unable to come out of their closed inner apartments, meditated upon Kṛṣṇa with closed eyes, their mind absorbed in him"(73).

72) Srīmad Bhāgavatam, Tr. N.Raghunathan, Vol.II, p.262

73) duhantyo'bhiyayuh kāściddoḥam hitvā samutsukāḥ /
payo'dhīśritya samyāvamanudvāsyāparā yayuh //
pariveṣayantyastaddhitvā pāyayantyaḥ śīśūnpayaḥ /
śuśrūṣantyaḥ patīnkāścidaśnantyo'pāsyā bhojanam //
līmpantyaḥ pramṛjantyo'nyā añjantyaḥ kāśca locane /
vyatyastavastrābharaṇāḥ kāścītkṛṣṇāntikaḥ yayuh //

At this stage King Parīkṣit puts a question to Śuka who was narrating the life of Kṛṣṇa by asking him how was it that the Gopis were stimulated by carnal love. Śuka answers:

kāmaṃ krodhaṃ bhayaṃ snehaṃ aikyaṃ sauhṛdameva ca /
nityaṃ harau vidadhataḥ yānti tanmayatām hi te // (74)

"Those who always direct their desire, anger, fear, affection, union, and friendliness towards Hari will eventually become one with him".

However intense the Gopis' love for him be, Kṛṣṇa himself tries to persuade the Gopis to go back by giving several reasons as to their duties as housewives. He says:

śravaṇāt darśanāt dhyānānmayi bhāvo'nukīrtanāt /
na tathā sannikarṣeṇa pratiyāta tato gṛhān // (75)

"The real devotion arises in your heart towards me by hearing about me, seeing me, meditating upon me and singing my glories, but not necessarily by staying close to me. So please return to your houses (and follow my words)". This hurts the Gopis. They do not pay any attention to Kṛṣṇa's words. Instead they argue with Him:

maivaṃ vibho'rhati gaditum nṛsaṃsam,
santyaḥya sarvaviṣayāṃstava pādamūlam /
bhaktā bhajasva duravagra mātyajāsmān
devo yathādipuruṣo bhajate mumukṣūn // (76)

"O Lord it is not right on your part to speak such cruel words to us who with sincere devotion have taken refuge at your feet, renouncing all worldly things. As Lord Ādi Puruṣa (Primordial Soul) takes care of those who desire salvation, similarly please accept us and

73) (continued from previous page)

tā vāryamāṇāḥ patibhiḥ pitṛbhirbhrātr̥bandhubhiḥ /
govindāpahr̥tātmāno na nyavartanta mohitāḥ //
antagr̥hagatāḥ kāścidgopyo'labdhavinirgamāḥ /
kṛṣṇaṃ tadbhāvanāyuktā dadhyurmīlitalocanāḥ // B.H.P. X-29-5 to 9

74) B.H.P. X-29-15

75) B.H.P. X-29-27

76) B.H.P. X-29-31.

please, please do not abandon us." They continue "for women, serving their husbands, children, guests is their dharma (duty) thus you the knower of dharma have spoken. Let it be so as you yourself have advised. You being the Lord, are the highest soul and are the nearest and dearest to all embodied creatures. (As such all these point only to you to whom such duties are due)"(77). They go still further and beg him requesting dehi dāsyam (78) "give us your servitude"; bhavāma dāsyah (79) "we would be your slaves" and cry. This shows how deeply the gopis had involved themselves with their Lord Kṛṣṇa. The Bhāgavata states:

iti viklavitaṃ tāsāṃ śrutvā yogeśvareśvaraḥ /
prahasya sadayaṃ gopīrātmārāmoparīramat // (80)

"Having listened to their confused, distressed, pitiable words, Kṛṣṇa the Lord of the Lords of Yoga, compassionately, with a big smile on his face set himself to please the gopis though he delights only in the Self".

Thus Kṛṣṇa played and danced in different ways with the Gopis filling them with delight. After some time he suddenly disappeared to see what they would do in his absence. Then the Gopis felt as if the whole world were empty. They thought of nothing else but Kṛṣṇa:

tanmanaskāstadālāpāstadviceṣṭāstadātmikāḥ /
tadguṇāneva gāyantyo nātmāgārāṇi sasmaruḥ // (81)

"Having him in their mind, speaking of him, imitating his plays, absorbed in him, and singing his glory they forgot themselves and their homes".

The Gopis went on singing Kṛṣṇa's glory in his separation and

77) B.H.P. X-29-32.

78) B.H.P. X-29-38d

79) B.H.P. X-29-39d

80) B.H.P. X-29-42

81) B.H.P. X-30-43

a whole chapter is devoted to this by the author of the Bhāgavata. These verses that are known by the name Gopī-Gītā are among the most famous verses in the whole of Sanskrit literature. These have pictured the Lord in the eyes of the Gopis. Each verse is a very fine example to show the depth of the love of the Gopis towards Lord Kṛṣṇa. One or two of them may be quoted here:

"No Gopī's son art Thou, That we know for sure
But Witness in the heart, Of all bodied selves;
Granting Brahma's prayer, Thou hast risen, Friend;
Among the Satvat clans; All the world to save".

The nectar of Thy lips, which prospers amour,
And with its long-drawn note; The flute has well kissed,
It banishes sorrow, And makes men forget,
All other loves; Great-heart, Give us that to drink " (83)

Kṛṣṇa, then suddenly reappeared amidst them! The Gopis took the liberty of feeling his every limb holding them against their bodies! Each of them had her own way of treating Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa was very pleased with them. In conclusion, he expressed himself in these words. "I could not repay you, even if I had the length of days of an immortal, for the flawless love you gave me, snapping the ageless fetters of house and home. Your goodness to me must be my quittance " (84).

Then all of them gathered together again and the Mahā Rāsa started. Kṛṣṇa, though he delights in the self, through his diverse līlā played with the Gopis (85). To the objection that was raised by Parīkṣit, namely, how could Kṛṣṇa mix with the wives of others, being the Supreme Self, Śuka says that "It is impossible for him who is not the Lord of the world even to think of such deeds (86)".

83) B.H.P. X-31-4,14 Translated by N.Raghunathan, Vol.II, p.275 & 277

84) B.H.P. X-32-22.

85) B.H.P. X-33-20b. Kṛṣṇa did not for himself need to play with the Gopis but he indulges them by doing what they wished him to do in order that they are happy. This may be regarded as the Kṛṣṇa - state of Ātmārāmatā meaning, the self which can delight unilaterally yet mingles with others to aid their delight.

86) B.H.P. X-33-31a.

After this there are the incidents of Gopis singing together happily of Kṛṣṇa when he was out to look after the cows. Once again Kṛṣṇa plays his flute and once again its effects are depicted in an excellent way. Even Brahma, Śiva and Indra were listening attentively to Kṛṣṇa's flute! (87)

The later chapters in the Bhāgavata include the killing, by Kṛṣṇa, of demons called Ariṣṭāsura, Keśi, Vyomāsura. In the meantime Akrūra leaves for Vraja. He, a great devotee of Kṛṣṇa, comes to Vraja and when the Gopis learn that Kṛṣṇa was about to leave, their plight was inexplicable. They were paralysed to hear that Kṛṣṇa had to go to Mathurā. The author of the Bhāgavata has drawn an extremely good picture in describing the poignancy of this 'permanent separation' from Kṛṣṇa. They scold the creator, they scold Akrūra who came to take Hari, and they even censure Kṛṣṇa by calling him navapriya⁽⁸⁸⁾ 'one who is fond of the new'. They express themselves in these words, thinking of his going to the city of Mathurā: "This day has dawned luckily for the women of the city, who will have their wish when the master of Vraja is with them and they drink in with their eyes that face which intoxicates like wine, with the smile breaking out at the corners of the eyes. Ah! my dears, how could Mukunda, brave though He be, and obedient to His elders, be expected to come back to us rustics, when He has fallen under the spell of their words, sweet as honey, their coy smiles and coquettish ways? Today the eyes of the Dāśārhas, Bhojas, Andhakas, Vṛṣṇis, and Sātvatas, as well as of those who see Him on the way, shall rejoice, looking at Devaki's son, the Darling of Śrī and the Home of all auspicious qualities" (89). They call Kṛṣṇa's

87) B.H.P. X-35-15

88) B.H.P. X-39-22 b

89) B.H.P. X-39-23, 24 and 25.

company nimiṣārdha dustyaja "Even half a minutes separation from him is unbearable indeed".

Akrūra takes Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa on his chariot to Mathurā and behind follow the people of Vṛndāvana. On the way, in Mathurā, Kṛṣṇa kills a washerman, blesses the flower-merchant, and graces the weaver. He also blesses the hunch-backed woman by granting her a beautiful form. She falls in love with the Lord and Kṛṣṇa accepts her invitation to visit her after meeting his parents. The rest of the incidents such as killing the elephants, the wrestlers and his uncle Kāṁsa are similar to those that appear in the Harivaṁśa and the Viṣṇupurāṇa.

Conclusion.

Thus a study of the early life of Kṛṣṇa as found in the major sources shows how they have regarded the boyhood of Kṛṣṇa. Though a closer observation reveals more details regarding the way each of these has depicted Kṛṣṇa, here are a few points as observed in this study:

- 1) The Mahābhārata being a treatise on the Kaurava and Pāṇḍava families, does not give any importance to the boyhood of Kṛṣṇa. Moreover, by the time Kṛṣṇa appears in the Mahābhārata, he was an adult with children.
- 2) As if to fill the gap that was left unfilled in the Mahābhārata, Kṛṣṇa's life with a history of his race has been given in detail in the Harivaṁśa. Kṛṣṇa, had been regarded as a divine being, an incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu. But ^{the} Harivaṁśa does not attach too much importance to this aspect of his. Wherever necessary, his divine nature has shone although without much proclamation.
- 3) The Viṣṇupurāṇa also follows the example of the Harivaṁśa as far as giving the details of Kṛṣṇa's boyhood. But here, one can see more divinity attached to Kṛṣṇa's character and the author has

emphasised certain aspects of Kṛṣṇa's life more by describing certain incidents in his life at greater length. The importance of the Gopis had already started gaining momentum when the sacred work came into existence. This idea received much support thereby in the Viṣṇupurāṇa.

4) The Bhāgavatapurāṇa excels both the Harivaṃśa and Viṣṇupurāṇa in its narration though it is indebted to the other two for the source material. As in the Viṣṇupurāṇa there is more evidence to add to the proven divinity of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The human aspects of Kṛṣṇa's life are handled with immaculate accuracy. Such details like Kṛṣṇa stealing butter and milk, playing with monkeys, playing with the Gopis, stand apart as a mark of the fine observing eye of the author. In fact it is this human touch that lifted the Bhāgavatapurāṇa high above the other Purāṇas. This Purāṇa stands as an example for the evolution of ideas over the centuries concerning divinity and human relationship. The number of verses that are sung to describe his life may be taken as an example. In the Bhāgavatapurāṇa these account for almost twice the number found in the two previous works.

Apart from this, the author of the Bhāgavata scores over the others in his interpretations of the incidents in the life of Kṛṣṇa, in a way worthy of a great seer. He uses different types of verses under different circumstances. In the Harivaṃśa and Viṣṇupurāṇa mostly Anuṣṭubh verses are made use of. But the Bhāgavata uses many more varieties of metre which help to bring out the required effect in a more delicate and perfect manner (90).

90) Here is a short list of some of the different types of metre that are used in the Bhāgavatapurāṇa. Each of these metres has been made use of by the poet so as to suit the occasion in the life of Kṛṣṇa. He has avoided the monotony of the Anuṣṭubh. The very form of these metres is intended to portray certain

(continued next page)

These verses along with the natural description evoke the hidden human emotion in a totally different vein. This has enabled the devotees to draw closer to their Lord. These ideas concerning Bālakṛṣṇa in their manifold aspects have helped in the development of the Haridāsa literature. The same appears in more details in the respective chapters of the present thesis.

90) (continued from previous page.)

experiences. The poet's speciality lies in the way he has made use of each of these to bring out the required effect.

a) Mandākrāntā X-8-29; X-21-5, etc.

b) Śikharinī X-13-47

c) Vasantatilakā X-16-21

d) Indravajrā X-12-40

e) Upendravajrā X-1-4

f) Upajāti X-8-39

g) Svāgatā X-35-2

h) Vaṁśastha X-29-4

and of course Anuṣṭubh is the main type.

7. BHAKTI IN THE SOUTH.

Early reference to the Bhakti cult in the South can be found in Tamilnadu. Here this cult had started from the early centuries of the Christian era. A study of history reveals that people in the Tamil country during the early days of the Christian era were worshipping forms of gods. These forms were both of Murukan and Viṣṇu, who are mentioned along with Varuṇa, Indra and Kōṛṛavai (Durgā). This is understood by the fact that Murukan, Māyoṇ, Indiran were the presiding deities of different geographical regions of the Tamil land (1). This period of early literature in Tamilnadu is known as the Sangam period. Paripāṭal, one of the Sangam works, affords us an early instance of Bhakti poetry that probably antedates Tevāram, 'the Garland of God', the great Śaiva hymns of the 7th.C. A.D. onwards. Included in Paripāṭal are hymns to Viṣṇu and Śkanda and Kōṛṛavai. The Paripāṭal songs on Māyoṇ, Viṣṇu, include a number of references to Kṛṣṇa. Indeed the term Māyoṇ means 'dark one'. These hymns may represent the earliest Śrī-Vaiṣṇava literature in Tamil. This shows that Kṛṣṇa-worship was already found in the south by that time, possibly as a result of the importance

- 1) "The Āryan God, Varuṇa, was probably the God of the Draviḍian tribes, being on the borders of the sea, to whom the Āryan Rishis accorded a place in their pantheon. The Āryan Rudra is another God of the Draviḍian tribes. He is essentially a mountain deity and could be evolved by the wild mountain-neers, say, of the Vindhyan regions and not by dwellers on the plains. His name Rudra meaning the 'Red one' seems to be a translation of the Draviḍian name Śiva Kōṛṛavai, the victorious matron, was the object of worship among the oldest peoples of the South. The hill God of the South, the son of Kōṛṛavai, is Murugan, the fragrant one. The Vēdic God, Kṛṣṇa, corresponds to the God of the Draviḍian ^{pastoral} tribes. "

Dr.K.K. Pillay, Studies in the History of India with special reference to Tamilnadu, p.62.

of bhakti in the Bhagavadgītā (2). These songs do not give much detail of the childhood and boyhood events of Kṛṣṇa. The reason is simple. The Harivaṃśa and Viṣṇupurāṇa were composed approximately at the same period and it must have taken some time for their themes to spread to the south. The later Ālvār have dealt in detail with the babyhood and childhood of Kṛṣṇa not so well brought out in the Bhāgavatapurāṇa.

According to their accompanying colophons, these Paripāṭal songs were set to music. Here is a portion of one of the Paripāṭal songs on Māyon: "O dark one! dark one! yours are the bright feet that unblemished, stamp out rebirth. Glittering sapphire-hued are you, O dark one! Fire, wind, sky, earth, water, these five, sun and moon are you, Virtue are you. The five planets are you. The children of Titi (Diti), the sons of Brahma, the eight flawless Vasus, the eleven children of the Sun, the heavenly Twins, death himself, the twenty one worlds and all life, O dark one, have extolled you" (3).

"You are the hidden force controlling all the planets, you are the night and you are the day you are the one whom even the Vedas fail to adore."^(3a) The next major reference to Vaisnavism occurs in the epic Cilappatikāram. Herein there is the mention of Nappinnai, referred to in the songs of the Ālvār and Āṇṭāl. The date of the Sangam works may lie between the 2nd and 5th centuries A.D. while Cilappatikāram may be a little later. The Ālvār were

2) "The tradition that the Brāhman sage Agastya led the first Āryan colony to the Pōdiya Hill and created Tamil literature probably arose in a later age, after Brāhman influences had gained the ascendent in the south, on the basis of the legends in the Sanskrit epics".

The Cambridge History of India, Vol.I, Ancient India p540 FN.1. edited by E.J. Rapson.

3) J.R. Marr, The eight Tamil anthologies with special reference to Purāṇānūru and Patirrupattu, p.396.

3a) This is what Purandaradāsa sings in his song, 'Sakalagrahabalaninē', Purandaradāsakīrtanē, part II, song 26

the first Vaiṣṇava devotees who concentrated upon the form of Viṣṇu. The mystic experience of three famous Ālvār when they happened to meet at a place on their way to shrines and temples is astonishing. Poykai Ālvār, Pūtattālvār and Pey Ālvār happened one day to stand under the same roof; they experienced the presence of a fourth being among them but they could not see Him. They felt as one feels in the presence of somebody. But He was invisible. Soon they were aware of the divine presence in their midst, and started spontaneously to sing Viṣṇu's praises in Tamil. These became the foundation for the development of the later Ālvār songs. People believe that these three Ālvār, otherwise known as Mutal Ālvār, are the Aṃśa partial incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu who came to release men from bondage.

These Ālvār were followed by a series of devotees who also sang in praise of Kṛṣṇa in Tamil. Prominent among them were Tirumālīcai Ālvār, Kulacekara Ālvār, Periyālvār, Āṇṭāl and Nammālvār. Up to Nammālvār, the songs they sang were mainly devotional, but after Nammālvār they started to inculcate philosophical ideas too. This could be felt in some of the songs of Nammālvār. It is believed that only from Nammālvār, the Guruśiṣya-Paramparā started (4).

Clear-cut philosophical ideas mixed with devotion started at the time of Nātamuni and continued during the times of later acāryas.

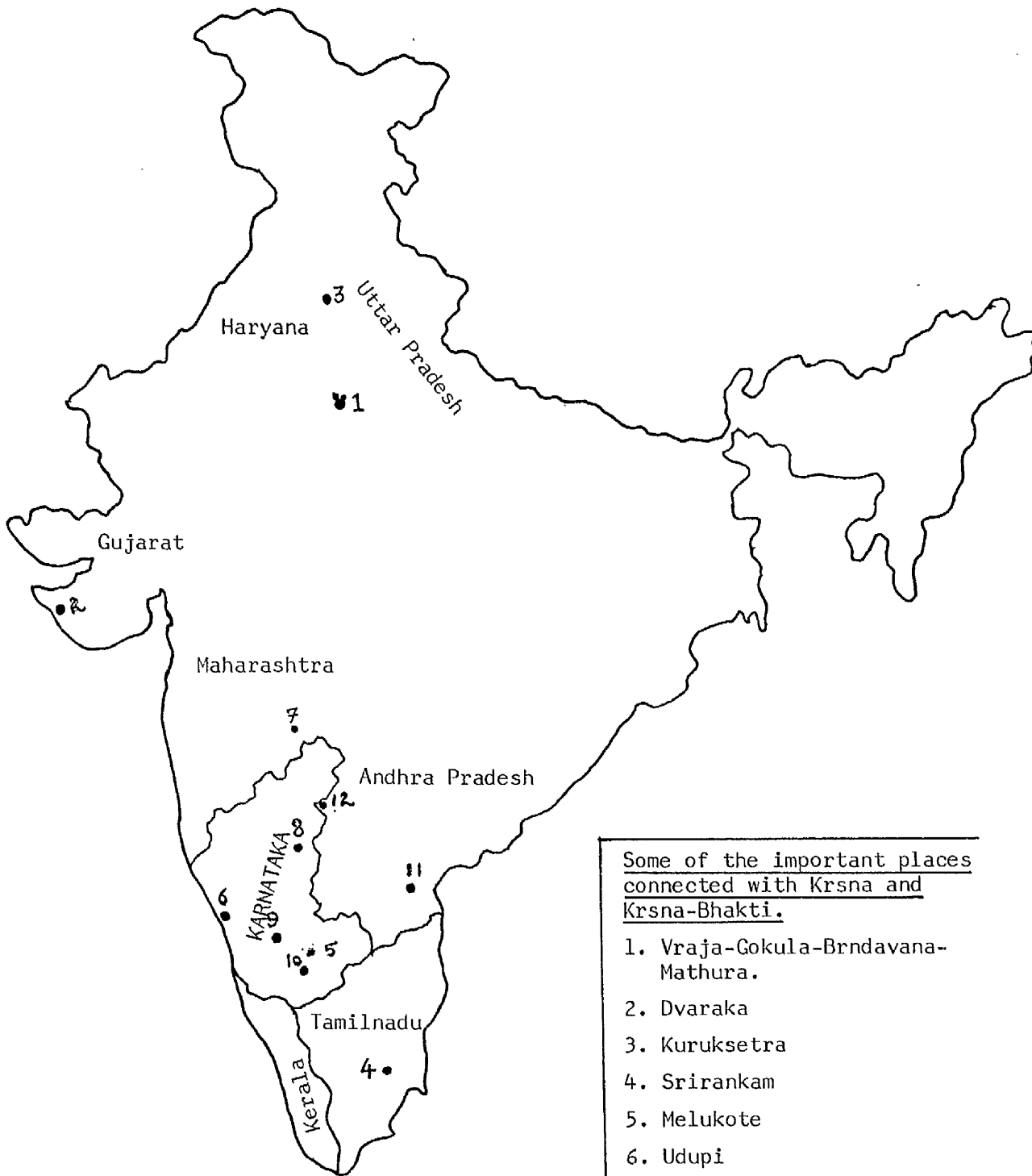
The major theme of all the literature of these Ālvār and acaryas is Viṣṇu Bhakti and its importance in one's life. Dāsyabhāva (5) plays a very important role in these songs. This is specially seen in the songs of Nammālvār. Here the devotees have to become the wife of the lord so that they can be completely under his grace.

4) Nātamuni succeeded Nammālvār and from him Pundarikākṣa and then to Rāma-miśra who was succeeded by Yāmunācārya. The line was continued later by the great Rāmānujācārya.

5) Considering one's self as God's servant.

Śaraṅgati ie. complete surrender of one's life is most important according to these Ālvār. These various bhāvas, they believed would take a human soul nearer to God.

Thus a general study of the essence of the songs from the Tamilnadu Vaiṣṇava devotees shows how similar their expressions are to the themes of the songs of Haridāśas of Karnataka.



Some of the important places connected with Krsna and Krsna-Bhakti.

1. Vraja-Gokula-Brndavana-Mathura.
2. Dvaraka
3. Kuruksetra
4. Srirankam
5. Melukote
6. Udupi
7. Pandharpur
8. Hampi
9. Belur
10. Srirangapattanam
11. Tirupati
12. Mantralaya

8. BHAKTI LITERATURE IN KARNATAKA.

Many stone inscriptions have been unearthed in Karnataka since 450 A.D. or even earlier. These are the ones which for the first time bear evidence, to a slight extent, regarding Bhakti and prayer in Karnataka. Some of these inscriptions have certain words indicative of gods and worship (1). There is no evidence on Bhakti prior to this, and the literary sources on Kannada do not commence before the 8th or 9th centuries A.D. These indeed contain much evidence for Bhakti. Karnataka has been a place of great attraction for many Vedantins and Bhaktas. The celebrated Śaṅkarācārya, a native of Kaladi (in the present Kerala State), lived around 8th and 9th century A.D. and established his first and foremost centre of teaching in Sringeri, a holy place in Karnataka. Śaṅkara became famous all over India for his highly analytical interpretation of Vedic texts. His philosophy is called Advaita, non-dualism. 'God is Brahman, and the rest of the world is His illusion'. He maintained at the outset that Jñāna is the only way to realise such Brahman. Probably Śaṅkara realised at a later stage that mere Jñāna is not enough, for it is very difficult for everyone to follow that path. If the learned only are eligible to realise such a truth, what about the not too learned or the illiterate? So seemingly as a result of this conflict, came from Śaṅkara such great literary creations as Mohamudgara, Śivānanda-laharī, Saundarya-laharī, in praise of the Lord emphasising the Bhakti aspect. Thus Bhakti acquired a recognition in its own right with the decided support of a great Jñānin like Śaṅkara. But until the advent of Basaveśvara, who lived around 1160 A.D. this Bhakti as a vehicle of expression for the followers of Vedic and Puranic scriptures could not spread. This was due to the very powerful support given to Jainism in Karnataka by the Raṣṭrakūṭa and Ganga rulers of that era. Around

1) R. Narasimhācārya, Śāsana Padyamanjari, p.1.

⊗ Pl. See p. 95

1150 - 1160 AD, these kings lost their hold and Jainism started loosing its importance.

At the same period, Karnataka gave rise to a new system of adoring God, the Vīraśaiva religion. This sect was founded by Basaveśvara, who was a brahmin by birth. Basaveśvara could not tolerate the brahmin dominance of society and also the rigid rules of the caste system. He did not like the interpretations of Vedic teachings concerning sacrifices. ^{The} Killing of animals to please the gods was unacceptable. So he stood against all these ritualistic practices imposed on society and gave prominence to honest and humble ways of living and worshipping. Unlike his predecessors, he set out his simple principles in an easy and elegant Kannada, the language of the masses. Basaveśvara became a minister to King Bijjala who ruled Kalyāṇa. His position gave him the leverage to get his radical ideas across to the masses. He was supported by such eminent men as Allamaprabhu, Cēnnabasava, Akkamahādevi, all of whom gave themselves to the cause of the common lot. They sang many simple verses in Kannada proclaiming the nearness of every human-being, high or low, and the smallest of God's creation to God himself - Śiva. There were no strict rules and regulations for joining their sect, and it was open to one and all without caste and class prejudices. Moreover, the principles of this religion were in simple Kannada, which was everybody's language. So this attracted many, and spread all over Karnataka in a very short span of time. This tradition was later hailed by literary giants like Harihara, Rāghavāṅka, Cāmarasa, Nijaguṇaśivayogi and the like. The Vīraśaivas, ^{as} this very religion indicates, considered Lord Śiva the supreme deity.

Around the same period (about 12th century A.D.) Rāmānuja who was driven away from Śrīraṅgam (in the present Tamilnadu State) for his staunch Vaiṣṇavite teachings and also his act of accepting

even Harijans (untouchables as they were then called) to the temples, came to Karnataka, the neighbouring State. He was well received in Karnataka and in due course, Bittideva, a Hoysala king and a follower of Jainism, recognised the scholarship of the great Ācārya and became his follower. He embraced Vaiṣṇavism. Henceforth he changed his name to Viṣṇuvardhana. With Viṣṇuvardhana's help, Rāmānuja was able to spread Vaiṣṇavism and Vedic principles which were being opposed by the Jains and by the strong sect of Vīraśaivas.

Though Vīraśaivism was also a theistic system, it held a derogatory attitude towards Vedic rituals that were strongly rooted in society. So Rāmānuja tried his best to restore the lost Vaiṣṇava and Vedic principles. Rāmānuja had the task of fighting for the revival of deep-rooted principles of living on Vedic lines. The atmosphere and environment presented to him were utterly hostile. On the one hand he had been rejected by his own people for supporting and granting succour to the downtrodden untouchables, and in Karnataka he had to contend with prejudices fostered against the Vedas by the Jainas and the Vīraśaivas. Unlike his predecessor Śaṅkara who maintained the strong divisionalism of caste, he tried to integrate the idea of Vaiṣṇavism via the Bhakti movement while still respecting the need for a caste system that facilitated the means by which people would earn their living. He gave Bhakti the highest state to attain the Lord. The reason why Rāmānuja met with only limited success may be due to the fact that, like Śaṅkara, he too came from a different land, and his main sayings were in Sanskrit and Tamil languages restricted on the one hand to the higher class and, on the other, not understood in Karnataka. It is very unfortunate that neither Śaṅkara nor Rāmānuja tried to express their ideas in Kannada as well. Even to this day, the Rāmānujaites have Tamil works of the Ālvār as their important scriptures.

Madhvācārya was born around 12th century A.D. but a little later than Rāmānuja. By the time he was working he had to face several other groups like the Advaitins, the Jainas, the Vīraśaivas and the Rāmānujaites. He had to find out a principle which could survive amidst all these strong groups. He directly opposed the māyāvāda and nirguṇa and nirākāra brahman and non-dual theories of the Advaitins, as they are far from the comprehension of an ordinary person. With the support of the majority of the common people who believed in the ritualistic and puranic principles, Madhva contended against the Vīraśaiva sect. While proclaiming the prominence of Viṣṇu, Madhva did not completely reject other gods like Śiva, or Gaṇeśa, but gave them subordinate positions. He differed in this approach from the Rāmānujaites who reject Śiva and from the Vīraśaivas who reject Viṣṇu. Moreover, as a Kannadiga, he understood the local people better than Rāmānuja and Śaṅkara.

Madhvācārya was born in a small village near Udupi (Pajaka) around 1200 A.D. (2). His parents were orthodox brahmins. It was the time when Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism in Karnataka were under threat of the Jaina kings. Madhva studied the Vedas and purāṇas when he was very young. He did not agree to the interpretations of the Vedic mantras by advaitins who claim that the whole world is māyā. To think that what we see, experience, and feel, is all an illusion, must have made him move away from such principles. Accordingly he advanced his own ideas before the public. Soon Madhva must have had to face a large number of people who came to argue with him. His simple theory that what the Vedas preach is true, and that there is always a difference between entities (3) must have

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- 2) There is much controversy going on regarding this. Some say it is in 1199 A.D. that Madhva was born and some other say it was in 1238. Those who want to know more about this can refer to - B.N.K. Sharma The History of Dvaita school of Vedanta and its literature, Vol.1.
- 3) i.e. that, inter alia, Paramatman and the individual atman are distinct.

attracted people to him. From the accounts available, it is known that Madhva travelled intensively the length and breadth of India and discussed and argued with many scholars. The doctrines of Jainism, Buddhism and Advaita were not for the common people. Jainism, and Buddhism preached against image-worship which a Hindu could never tolerate, and Advaitism effectively placed God on a par with one's self. This and its emphasis on the point that the Supreme Self is formless, without qualities and that ^{the} world is an illusion of the Lord made it difficult for ordinary people to understand these principles. Vīraśaivas who were also trying to drive away the non-theistic religious Jainism and Buddhism were against many of the Vedic teachings. Indian society which was mainly theistic needed somebody who could represent both the intellectual as well as the ordinary man by interpreting the Hindu ethics of life in a way easily grasped by all. Fortunately Madhva happened to be the one who had all these qualities. He called the Supreme Brahman Viṣṇu with qualities and form and illustrated it with several examples from the Vedas and Upaniṣads and Ēpics and purāṇas. The masses who were familiar with Hindu scriptures found it easy to accept Viṣṇu as the Supreme Self. At the same time Madhva preached that it was Bhakti that would take a man nearer to God. He would quote suitable instances from the Ēpics and purāṇas. These illustrations which were already rooted in the hearts of the masses would give them complete satisfaction. Thus Vaiṣṇavism became popular. The spread of Vaiṣṇavism was more marked than that of Śaivism. This is also due to the fact that more of the early Purāṇas dealt with the life of Viṣṇu; and he appeared in more than one form like Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Vāmana, Paraśurāma etc. Even the great Ēpics Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata glorify the characters Rāma and Kṛṣṇa who are none other than Viṣṇu himself. Emphasising all these aspects Madhva successfully spread the supremacy of Lord Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa.

Apart from this, as history has it, Madhva installed the statue of Bālakṛṣṇa at Udipi. The statue came to Udipi by a small ship from Dvārka. Thereafter Madhva was succeeded by many followers who upheld his teachings. The Haridasas were a group of followers who spread his philosophy, and also, the greatness of Bhaktimārga, the path of devotion, in Kannada.

Madhva, though he did not write in Kannada, certainly must have inspired people to write in their own language. He has written many valuable works among which the Brahmasūtra-Bhāṣya, Gītā-Bhāṣya, Upaniṣad-Bhāṣya, Mahābhārata-Tātparya-Nirṇaya are the most famous. He has composed Bhāgavatātātparya, Dvādaśastotra, Viṣṇutattvavirṇaya, Kṛṣṇāmṛta-mahārṇava, Aṇuvyākhyāna as well. In all these works he has proved the supremacy of Lord Viṣṇu above other gods. He was particularly fond of Viṣṇu in the form of Kṛṣṇa and hence more works praising Viṣṇu in his Kṛṣṇa form. Among these, Dvādaśastotra is more rhythmic than his other works. It glorifies Viṣṇu as seen in his different incarnations.

It is Madhva's teachings and his conception of Bālakṛṣṇa that have inspired the later devotees of the same order. Madhva himself has not given any descriptive account of the child Kṛṣṇa as such, apart from the short references one finds in his Bhāgavatātātparya and Dvādaśastotra. The very fact that he installed Bālakṛṣṇa with a churning-club in his hand, has become a source for innumerable songs. All the songs by the Haridāśas sing the glory of the Lord in his childhood, and at the same time follow Madhva's Dvaita teachings.

A brief introduction to Madhva's Philosophy.

In the songs of the Haridāśas, apart from those which depict the life of Bālakṛṣṇa, there are several songs on the theme of Dvaita philosophy. Even in other compositions such as the Bālakṛṣṇa songs, songs sung to cleanse the society, one can find the supremacy

of Viṣṇu over other deities emphasised. As Purandaradāsa, Kanakadāsa and other Haridāśas were followers of this great Ācārya here a very short account of Madhva's philosophy is given.

The whole of Indian philosophy is the result of the meditation of the mind about the 'self', ātma vicāra carcā. The aim of such a type of thinking is peace, salvation and mokṣa (liberation). Indian philosophy is divided into two: 1. Theistic and 2. Atheistic. A theistic philosophy is one which teaches that the words spoken in the Vedas, the Upaniṣads and such other revealed works are true. Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Mīmāṃsa and Vedānta are the six systems of theistic philosophy. The rest, such as Bauddha and Cārvāka are atheistic philosophies. Among these six systems the only one which is still in wide use is the Vedānta philosophy. The reason may lie in its simplicity. It does not rely greatly on disputations to establish its basic principles. Moreover it has been represented and supported by very great commentators.

The Vedānta philosophy was founded by Bādarāyaṇa and his writings are called Vedānta Sūtras or Brahma-Sūtras. These deal with the culmination of the Vedas by explaining the mantra portions which are concerned with speculations in the field of ontology or metaphysics, and are linked to individual Vedas. To these Brahma-sūtras three different masters have written commentaries. The commentary by Śaṅkara is called Śāṅkarabhāṣya which represents the Advaita philosophy, the one by Rāmānuja is called Śrībhāṣya representing the Viśiṣṭādvaita philosophy and the last is by Madhvācārya representing the Dvaita philosophy.

All the three philosophies consider the Brahmasūtras, the Vedas, the Gītā and the Upaniṣads as the authorities for their works. The commentators' ideas are all drawn directly or indirectly from these works. But, as a mountain looks different when seen from

different angles, similarly these three philosophies differ in their interpretations. But the final goal is the same mokṣa.

Śrī Śaṅkara says that brahma satyam jaganmithyā (4). "Brahman is the only reality, the world is an illusion of that Brahman," ie, the one which is unchanged internally and appears to change its form. This is called Māyā. Creating illusion is its characteristic feature and the individual soul is Brahman and none other. He also states that Brahman is without qualities, with qualities, without form, with forms, omnipresent, omnipotent and beyond expression. According to Śaṅkara, knowing one's self clearly as the universal soul is salvation.

With regard to Rāmānuja this world is a portion of Brahman and the result of the power of such Brahman. He is with form and qualities (5) and omnipresent. He is Nārāyaṇa. The individual soul is a part of the universal soul and inferior to it, and is made out of it. Enjoying oneness with the universal soul is salvation and Bhakti (devotion) filled with knowledge is the way to such an end.

In Madhva's view, the world is quite different from Brahman and it has five types of differences. The Brahman is Saguṇa with qualities and Sākāra with form. Jīva is different from Brahman. Lord Hari is the supreme. The close company of such a supreme being is salvation or real happiness and devotion is the way to achieve

4) Śaṅkarācārya, Vivekacudamani. 10

5) Nārāyaṇa of Viśiṣṭādvaitins is the same, as the Upaniṣadic brahman endowed with the eternal attributes of truth, goodness, beauty and bliss. He is Saguṇa and not Nirguṇa (with attributes and not attributeless) when the Upanisads declare that Brahman is nirguṇa the meaning is not that God is devoid of all attributes but only of those attributes which are dispicable and evil (heya).

T.M.P. Mahadevan, Invitation to Indian Philosophy, p.275-276

such happiness (6).

If one considers these three philosophies, there seems to be no difference of aim: mokṣa. But the interpretations are different. The Vedic texts themselves have led the commentators to interpret the truth in different ways. Ideally, to reach that truth - the highest goal, anybody can follow any path he or she likes. (In practice one's path is directed by circumstances of community, upbringing, teaching, and the like. In the past a number of Bhaktas have, by their example, shown how difficult the choosing of an individual path may be. Instances are Kanakadāsa of Karnataka, Nantanār of Tamilnadu. Too much argument may cause damage to the essential truth of universal principles.

The present essay, which is going to be explained in detail shortly, draws much of its inspiration from the teachings of Madhvācārya, the founder of Dvaita philosophy. As Śrī P.Nagaraaja Rao says "The advaitins have intepreted the three texts (viz., the Brahma-sūtras, The Gītā and the Upaniṣads) from the monistic stand point. The Ramanujāits have interpreted the texts from an organic stand point. Dvaitins have intepreted the texts from a pluralistic, theistic and realistic viewpoint" (7). Madhva admits that Bhakti is the way to attain the highest goal and his idea is that Bhakti joined with knowledge is the way to it.

bhaktyā jñānaṃ tato bhaktiḥ tato dṛstiḥ
tataśca sā tato muktiḥ.

(8)

-
- 6) māhātmyajñānapūrvastu sudṛḍhaḥ sarvato'dhikaḥ /
sneho bhaktiriti proktaḥ tayā muktirna cānyathā // MBh.T.N. I-86

"The firm and powerful love of God which is greater than all other relationships in this world, which is supported by the knowledge of His greatness, is termed Bhakti. There is no other way of salvation but this".

- 7) P. Nagaraja Rao. The Teachings of ^{Śrī}Madhva, p.2

- 8) Madhvācārya - Anuvyākhyāna III - 4.

"Bhakti leads to Jñāna and this Jñāna leads one to the higher stage of devotion. From such ripened devotion one attains mukti". Madhva also maintains that -

jñānasya bhaktibhāgatvāt bhaktirjñānamitīryate / (9)

"Because of the non-separable connection between Bhakti and Jñāna - at times Bhakti is referred to as Jñāna itself".

Sri Madhvācārya takes the Rāmāyaṇa, the Mahābhārata, the Pañcarātrāgama and some of the Purāṇas as authorities along with the three texts mentioned above. The characteristics of his arguments as reported by later scholars are (a) strong independent ideas, (b) simple logic, (c) convincing quotations for his views, and (d) loyalty to the Vedas.

Sri Madhvācārya maintains that the essential message of all the Vedas is the difference between Lord Hari and the individual souls and He (Lord Hari) is praised as Puruṣottama in the Gītā. According to him the words of the Vedas primarily apply to the Lord Hari and then to other forms of God. Lakṣmī - Lord Hari's consort is given the next supremacy to Lord Hari and then is the position of Vāyu (10). Lakṣmī is dependent on Viṣṇu. All devotion should go to Lord Hari through Vāyu without passing whom the devotion will not be approved.

Madhva classifies the individual souls into three divisions
1) Sāttvika souls - which enjoy the highest bliss 2) Nityasaṃsārins who incarnate again and again in this world (Rājasa) and 3) Tamoyo-yogyas who by their conduct are deprived completely of that bliss or knowledge.

Viśiṣṭa 'difference' is the pivot of this philosophy around which the system revolves. According to this philosophy the difference is eternal and real, and is of five types. 1) The difference between

9) Madhvācārya - Aṇuvyākhyāna III -4.

10) Vāyu is inside every being in the form of vital air. Hence his importance (Madhva is considered as an incarnation of Vāyu after Hanumān and Bhīma).

Jīva and Īśvara, 2) The difference between Jīva and Jīva, 3) The difference between Jaḍa (inanimate) and Īśvara, 4) The difference between Jaḍa and Jaḍa and lastly 5) The difference between Jaḍa and Jīva.

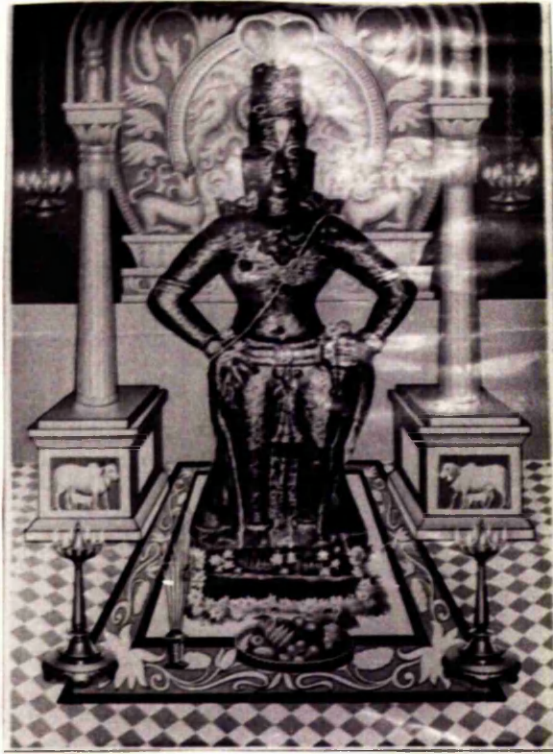
The spiritual capacities of different souls differ in degree as well as in kind. The means also differ for salvation. The road is Jñāna Mārga which can be attained through Śravaṇa, Manana, Nididhyāsana, i.e., hearing, reflecting, and constant meditation, which later leads to Bhakti.

Pratyakṣa 'perception', Anumāna, 'inference' and Āgama, 'verbal testimony', are the basis or grounds of proof. Even here the first two are subordinate to the third.

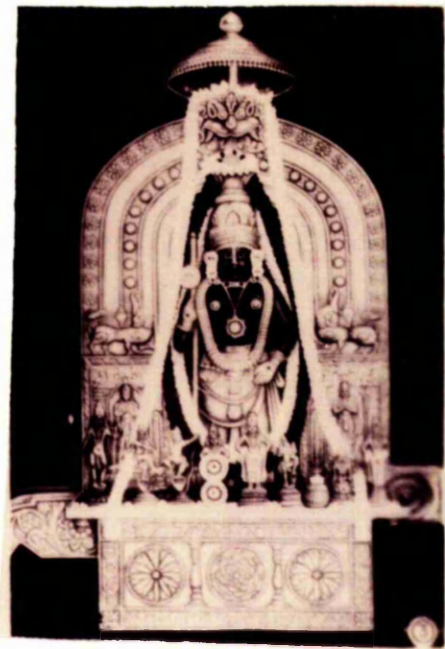
Love of God is the aim of life according to Dvaita philosophy. To achieve this love one must take to upāsana (11) 'meditation', which can be named Bhakti, but not mere emotionalism, Mūḍha-Bhakti. This Bhakti is further defined as detachment from worldly things and attachment to the Lord Vairāgya Bhakti. This leads to salvation which is the result of the teaching of a master at the right time. This initiation or teaching by a master is, as usual, very important. Then only the grace of the Lord falls upon him, past actions will come to an end and then being led by Vayu to the Lord, he enjoys the everlasting bliss.

Dvaita philosophy admits the value of human experience. Its adherents do not agree with Māyāvāda which, they hold, leads one to confusion or illusion theory. Good conduct or good nature is the path to all achievements according to Dvaitins. This good conduct or good nature has been named morality by P.Nagaraja Rao with a

11) harerupāsana cātra sadaiḥva suharūpiṇī
na tu sādhanabhūtā sā siddhirevātra sā yataḥ // Madhvācārya
(as quoted in the book Madhva's teachings in his own words, p.107)
"Meditating upon Lord Hari is bliss in itself. It is not a means but an end in itself".



Lord Viṭhala of Pandharapur



Udupi Kṛṣṇa bedecked with
different kinds of
ornaments.

fine discription: "The greatness of Dvaita vedanta is the unflinch-
ing faith in the divine law. The disciplinary training prescribed
in dvaita vedanta does not annihilate individuality. Morality for
the Dvaitin is not a mere stepping stone. It is a religion lived.
The path of the moral life is the path of the devotee. Morality
is not made an end in itself in the manner of the modern humanist.
The true test of moral activity is the performance of the duty as
a divine commandment" (12).

The Deity Viṭhala in person and his place:

Lord Viṣṇu in different forms, especially in his Kṛṣṇa form
is the source of inspiration to the Bhāgavatas in Karnataka as in
other regions. The followers of Madhva are inspired by Kṛṣṇa in his
boyhood. This is mainly because of the importance given to Kṛṣṇa
by the great Madhvācārya who installed Bālakṛṣṇa at Udupi and also
because of Bālakṛṣṇa's pranks wonderfully depicted in the Bhāgavata.
Though Kṛṣṇa was the chosen deity of these devotees some of them
worshipped Kṛṣṇa in his Viṭhala form, some Kṛṣṇa in his Keśava form,
Kṛṣṇa in his Kṛṣṇa form, Kṛṣṇa in his Ranga form, Kṛṣṇa in his
Śrīnivāsa form and the like. Hence the importance to the places
where these particular deities are enshrined ie., Pandharapur, Belur,
Kaginele, Udupi, Hampi, Srirangapatnam, Srirangam, Tirupati, etc.
All these are very important pilgrimage centres to the Haridāsas.
Of these, Pandharapur, which is now in Maharashtra State, belonged
to Karnataka during the 12th and 13th century A.D. This point could
be strengthened by the sayings of such devotees like Jñānadeva (13)
and Nāmadeva (14). Here are a few lines which support the

12) P. Nagaraja Rao, The Teachings of ^{Śrī}Madhva, p.26

13) In his work Jñānadevagāthā, Jñānadeva has uttered "Viṭhala
of Karnataka attracted my mind towards him"; Abhaṅga No.764.

14) Nāmadeva in one of his songs says that as Kāśī to Kanog kingdom
and Dvarakā to Gujarat, so Pandharapur to Karnataka.

Nāmadevagāthā, Abhaṅga No. 538-1.

above-said point.

A copper plate discovered in Kolhapur refers to some donations given to a brahmin of five villages among which Pandharapur is also one. The date of this plate has been placed around 516 A.D. This language has been identified as old Kannada. Deleury states ^{therefore} "It is ^Aprobable that, at that time, the official language of that part of the Deccan was Kannada, and it is even possible that the language of the people was also Kannada"(15).

Even after this time Calukya Pulikeśin was the ruler of this part of the country and this was under the control of the Calukyas until at least 756 A.D. (16).

An inscription of 1237 A.D. found at Pandharpur tells of the reigning deity Vithala for the first time. The language of this inscription is found to be partly in Kannada (17). Caundarasa (18) was living in 1300 A.D. at Pandharpur and was a great devotee of Vithala and his "Abhinavadasa Kumara Carita" contains passages suggestive of Viṭhala Bhakti (19). Around 13th Cen. A.D. the name Viṭhala started appearing on inscriptions and hereafterwards this name is found in abundance all over Karnataka (20). These references show that Viṭhala and Viṭhalabhakti were familiar in Karnataka. Apart from this it is also a well-known fact that Śrī Madhvācārya had given the icons of Viṭhala for worship to the Siryur, Puttige and Subrahmanya maṭhas. Even to this day in these maṭhas, which were established by Madhvācārya, the prime worship is offered to Lord Viṭhala. This speaks by itself of the widespread importance of devotion to Lord Viṭhala by that time. This must have influenced

15) G.A. Deleury - The cult of Viṭhobā, p.27

16) ^{See} G.A. Deleury - The cult of Viṭhobā, p.28-29

17) ^{See} G.A. Deleury - The cult of Viṭhobā, p.33

18) A Kannada poet.

19) R. Narasimhachar - Karnataka Kavacaritre, Part I, p.403-4

20) Epigraphia Carnatica Vol.3, p.494, Nos.152, 153 ...

later Haridāśas of Karnataka. Around the same period or aroundⁿ 14th or 15th C. A.D. (21) the rulers of Vijayanagar had built a temple to Viṭhala in Hampi. This was the place where Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa were initiated to the Haridāsa group by their master Vyāsarāya. This also adds to the importance of Viṭhalabhakti, felt during that time.

21) K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, N. Venkataramanayya, eds.,
Further Sources of Vijayanagara History, p.108, 109.

9. BEGINNINGS OF HARIDASA LITERATURE.

The Forerunners:

The famous Madhvācārya was succeeded by one Padmanābhatīrtha. Śrī Padmnābhatīrtha died around 1323 A.D. and this was the time when Naraharītīrtha, a disciple of Madhva who came from Orissa state, took over the maṭha, and he was the leader of the maṭha for about nine years.

People in Karnataka had believed that it is this Naraharītīrtha who inspired later Haridāśas to write in Kannada. But this point is yet to be accepted, for many controversies still continue on this matter. Today there are two to three compositions available which are known to have been composed by Śrī Naraharītīrtha, and probably these are the first Haridāśa compositions in the sense that they are written by those who followed Madhva. But scholars have doubts as to who really was the author of these compositions considering the language of the songs and also the area from where Śrī Naraharītīrtha came (1). G.Vardarājaṣṭrāv rightly points out that 'it is not strange if Naraharītīrtha had composed in Kannada having lived in Karnataka for a long time'. The available Kannada compositions differ from one version to another, so it is difficult to say which of these belong to Naraharītīrtha. Moreover, certain aspects of these songs which appear to have been set to music also puts forth problems, for history puts the origin of such music compositions like the kīrtanas at a different period (15th C. A.D) (2). So the problem is still unresolved.

These songs by Naraharītīrtha depict the hearts of devotees. The first song ēntu maruḷādē..(3) 'How I was beguiled,' is in a way

1) Naraharītīrtha belonged to Orissa where Kannada was not spoken.

2) P. Sambamurthy - History of Indian Music, p.80.

3) G. Varadarājaṣṭrāv , Haridāśa Hṛdaya, p.132-133.

accusing one's own self of its deceitful behaviour in making one suffer in the world. Finally Naraharitīrtha says "Pray to Lord Hari the one who is sung by Brahma and others. Keep away from lust, greed and other evil forces. Sing in praise of Śrī Hari, Lord Raghupati - the one who is saluted by the pious". The second song hariyē idu sariyē .. (4) "Lord Hari, is this right on your part?" Calls for the Lord to shower his blessings on his devotees. In this song the devotee quotes from the purāṇas how the Lord has taken care of his worshippers.

After Naraharitīrtha the history of Karnataka does not record anybody who succeeded him for about 100 years (5).

Śrīpādarāja:

For about 100 years or so after Śrī Naraharitīrtha there is not much evidence concerning Haridāsa literature. By the 15th century Haridāsa literature found a real leader in Śrīpādarāja (1404 to 1502 A.D.). The life and times and other such details of these saintly devotees are always shrouded in mystery and it is sheer accident to find certain information regarding their history in other devotees' songs. Fortunately Śrī Vyāsarāya, Vijayadāsa and some later dāsas have mentioned about Śrīpādarāja in their songs.

Śrīpādarāja lived in a village called Abbūr near Channapatna of Bangalore district. The whole family of Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa, as Śrīpādarāja was then called, was very devoted to God. He was initiated into asceticism, saṁnyāsa at a very young age and in a very short period he learnt all the required knowledge of scriptures and the works of Dvaita philosophy. It is well known that he was initiated to saṁnyāsa by Svarṇavarṇatīrtha, a Madhva Svāmi at

4) G. Varadarājaśāstrī, Haridāsa Hṛdaya, p.134.

5) There are very many controversies about the advent of a sect or people called the Ādyas and Ārādhyas who are supposed to have participated in this Haridāsa movement. There are no strong provable links between this sect and Madhvācārya. This is not discussed here for lack of convincing source literature.

Srirangam and then Śrīpādarāja came to Mulubagilu in Karnataka (6).

Though Śrīpādarāja was a great scholar both in Sanskrit and Kannada, we have, at least, his songs in Kannada. His Sanskrit work Vāgvajra is under dispute as being his, because it has not been on the lips of the scholars like the works of other Dvaita masters. But Śrīpādarāja would be remembered not just for his learning, not for being a very staunch Dvaitin, but for his great encouragement - the encouragement for others to write in Kannada. Practically speaking, though Naraharītīrtha was the first Dvaita Ācārya known to have attempted writing in Kannada the principles of Dvaita philosophy and of Bhakti, literally it is Śrīpādarāja who began this great tradition. All praise should go to him for he loosened the tradition, once and for all, of erudite writing in Sanskrit, and took to the local language. He was the first milestone who sang the glory of Dvaita philosophy and the importance of Bhakti in Kannada and it may be confidently asserted that he was the pioneer of the Dāsa Sāhitya in Kannada. After all it was the beginning of Haridāsa literature. It is not yet definitely known whether Śrī Naraharītīrtha really sang and composed in Kannada or not, but there is no doubt about Śrīpādarāja having done so. The numerous songs by him are the proof of his great service. It is always those who start something for the first time face many difficulties. It is they who lead the way for others. So their path would be a challenging one and would involve many problems and vicissitudes. When one looks into the literature that Śrīpādarāja has created, it would certainly reveal that he has succeeded in his endeavours marvellously.

The beginner of Dāsa-Sāhitya:

It is probable that present day singing of kīrtanas in the temples and dancing to their tunes were initiated in Karnataka by Śrīpādarāja. It is this tradition that Purandara and Kanaka^{dāsa} later

6) G. Varadarājarāv, ed; Śrīpādarājara Kṛtigalu, p.XII

followed and were succeeded by others. At this juncture it is necessary to have a small note on Śrīpādarāja's early days as a Saṁyāsin.

Śrīpādarāja was ordained to Saṁyāsa by Svarṇavarṇatīrtha who lived in Srirangam. Śrīpādarāja also stayed in Srirangam for quite a long time. Srirangam is one of the very famous Vaiṣṇava centres of South India. It was ^{the} centre of the Ālvār ever since their emergence in Tamilnadu. All important Tamil Vaiṣṇava saints have sung and glorified Lord Raṅganātha (Viṣṇu). This Ālvār devotion tradition that started around 6th C. A.D. grew from strength to strength as centuries passed. They used to sing the glory of the Lord and dance in ecstasy according to the purport of these songs. When Śrīpādarāja was living in Srirangam he must have been watching these Ālvār singing the kirtans and dancing in front of the Lord. He must have been astounded at the response of the masses towards such innocent spontaneous devotional outbursts. This might have inspired him to start a similar movement in Karnataka to draw people to the devotional path. Moreover, the kirtans and songs in Tamilnadu were in Tamil, not in Sanskrit. This helped ordinary people to join the erudite group and participate in devotion. So this must have had its effect too. At the same time Śivaśaraṇas of Karnataka had gained much popularity for their simplicity of teaching and their easy and elegant Kannada which they used to propogate their ideas among the masses. Śrīpādarāja was sure that the popularity of these Śivaśaraṇas was mainly to a great extent because of their teachings in simple Kannada language. The result was, many songs in Kannada by Śrīpādarāja. It is no wonder if Śrīpādarāja had danced singing his own compositions for he only knew the worth and joy of it. Thus, he gave a fine turn to the dvaita literature. It is therefore why he is rightly called the beginner of the Haridāsa movement.

His Works.

Śrīpādarāja's songs cover a wide range of themes. As Kṛṣṇa songs are relevant here, only a few of them are given.

- A) Where had you been for playing, my Ranga,
Where did you play, not playing around me?

You did not play in the house
You rejected your milk and sugar.
You did not play with the little girls, dear,
My little one, instead of playing around me
(lit., in front of my eyes) where did you play?

Your eyes are like fine pearls, and
A mark of musk beautifies your forehead,
All these to play somewhere else with your playful pranks!
Little Kṛṣṇa, you did not play with me. Where did you play?

I searched everywhere but could not find you,
I have lost my heart by not seeing you.
Why don't you listen to me? In what other way can I ask you?
O Rangavithala, without playing with me where did you play? (7)

- B) All the gopis gathering together are talking nonsense about me;
They call me a thief-gopi and they are trying to kill me!

To drink the milk of a big pan;
Is my stomach a lake, mother?
Call and ask my brother and if found guilty
You tie me to the mortar, my mother.

To eat the preserved butter - on my part
Is it not something bad?
If I even wish for that
Won't HE take away my eyes?

To climb the attic and loot the milk
Is it so easy for me mother?
I could not even finish what you gave me,
But left some of it and went away.

To show my obstinacy to them, am I
A grown man? you tell me, mother.
Whoever sees me they say something bad of me.
Am I not your son, mother?

With her hands which had a ring on it,
The Gopi lifted Kṛṣṇa up
Singing the glory of Rangaviṭhala, Udupi Kṛṣṇa
She rocked and rocked the cradle. (8)

These two songs by Śrīpādarāja reveal little Kṛṣṇa's mischievous nature. Yaśodā was unable to spend even a single minute without him. She wanted him to play where she could watch him. But little Kṛṣṇa has stealthily slipped away and has played somewhere else. He has not even played with the other boys and girls who were around and has played somewhere else. Kṛṣṇa has not come for his milk and Yaśodā could not find him though she searched for him everywhere. In a mood of melancholy she asks him "Kṛṣṇa, my darling, where did you play, not playing in front of my eyes? All parents will understand this mental status of a mother. Yaśodā's concern for Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa trying to avoid elders, these with the background of his divinity create a kind of atmosphere which is better felt than expressed.

The second song is about Kṛṣṇa's knavery and his defence against the complaint of the gopis. Kṛṣṇa rejects all the reports of the gopis and defends himself with his clever encounters. Yaśodā who was in a dilemma as to what to do regarding his mischief could not hide her immense joy when she heard Kṛṣṇa's charming words. She hugged her son forgetting the whole world. What any mother would have done at such an occasion Yaśodā did, and hence the universal appeal.

Apart from these songs on Bālakṛṣṇa Śrīpādarāja's Bhramaragītē, the bee-song, is also well known. This bee-song is composed on the

lines of the Bhramaragītā verses found in the tenth book of the Bhāgavatapurāṇa. The gopis who were suffering from the pang of Kṛṣṇa's separation speak to a bee addressing it as if it were a messenger from Kṛṣṇa. In this pretext they pour their heart giving vent to their feelings towards Kṛṣṇa.

In general, Kannada literature was growing constantly but the popular Vaiṣṇava literature as such was at its beginning. There were Vaiṣṇava kāvyaas dealing with the life of Kṛṣṇa as found in Rudrabhaṭṭa's Jagannātha-Vijaya or as found in Kumāra-vyāsa's Gadugina Bhārata. But these works were of the kāvya-style: Jagannātha-Vijaya of Rudrabhaṭṭa was restricted only to a group of people who are well-educated and who know Sanskrit to ^acertain extent and Kumāra-vyāsa's composition dealt with Kṛṣṇa's later life. But such compositions that belonged to all groups of people were rare. Śrīpādarāja started this for the first time and he selected the interesting point from Kṛṣṇa's early life and sang them in simple Kannada. This new task which Śrīpādarāja undertook could not have been an easy one. But he succeeded. His greatness lies in the fact that he opened and introduced a new path which eased the responsibilities of later Haridāśas of his group. The recitation of kīrtana tradition which probably were not familiar to Kannada people took them by surprise. This is one of the very important contributions of Śrīpādarāja (Contemporarily there were compositions of Śivaśaraṇas and also a few by the Haridāśas that looked at life from different angles. These songs were directed towards changing the unhealthy practices of society in a moralistic way. But singing the glory of the Lord as such was a rare occurrence.)

However, one of the drawbacks in Śrīpādarāja's compositions is that however much he tried he could not avoid several Sanskrit words which do not allow his intended ideas to be easily comprehended

by the masses (9). And also his compositions on Bālakṛṣṇa were only a few in number. He was more of a saint and so there was always a gap between him and the common man.

Vyāsarāya:

Vyāsarāya, a disciple of Śrīpādarāja, the guru of Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa, understood the limited influence of his masters who were themselves strict ascetics (Saṁyāsins), propagating the Madhva philosophy and the concept of Bhakti. Being a Saṁyāsin endows one with great power, no doubt, but there were and still are certain obstacles in one's relationship with the general public. A Saṁyāsin can of course go from one place to another, give lectures on philosophy, culture, religion and Bhakti, but to mix with all kinds of people and to convince them individually was another matter. Ascetics were not permitted to move freely among the people of any caste and particularly of lower castes. Maybe some of them were mentally prepared for this, but, they had to be bound by the religious laws of Saṁyāsins, and the rigid and orthodox society was always watching them very keenly.

However, gradually there were some changes. Firstly, the tradition of writing in Sanskrit was broken by Śrī Naraharitīrtha, then it was continued by Śrīpādarāja who took this further and brought home to the masses the very little-known tradition of singing and dancing in praise of the Lord. Thus he helped people to participate in group activities which gave strength to theism in general and Vaiṣṇavism in particular. This task was carried still further with more success by Śrī Vyāsarāya. Vyāsarāya not only continued this tradition of singing in Kannada, but also permitted people of

9) All these points are made having Purandaradāsa's songs in mind. Purandaradāsa's Kannada was more elegant and he knew the minds of common people better than the others. So his songs pushed aside the songs of all other Haridāśas, past - present and future.

different castes to join in their singing the praise of the Lord. Vyāsarāya established his liberality by admitting Kanakadāsa (born to a low-caste family) as his disciple. Proof has not been forthcoming to show that Śrīpādarāja allowed people of other castes to come and join the upper class people in singing the Lord's praise although he is supposed to have begun this tradition. But we do have evidence that Vyāsarāya did this with the solemn studentship of Kanakadāsa. This was one of the greatest changes brought out in the Dvaita group. Vyāsarāya's success was due to his all powerful personality and to his exalted status as a guru to the kings of Vijayanagara. Still, the opposition he met with when admitting Kanakadāsa, reveals the strong feeling of caste that prevailed during his period, viz., the 16th century.

Vyāsarāya knew that the common folk are equally eligible for the grace of God : to walk with others in the religious path of Vaiṣṇavism. He gave a new dimension to the bhakti-dominated Dvaita movement. He started a school wherein he welcomed disciples from all castes. Among them Kanakadāsa was also one. It may be that people say that Kanakadāsa was very intelligent, so Vyāsarāya admitted him as his disciple. Still, to allow an outcaste to sit with other orthodox disciples was no less an achievement. Vyāsarāya also knew the limitations of a Saṁ^{nyā}sin. He is fortunate to have, among his disciples married people like Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa who were great votaries of Vaiṣṇavism and Bhakti. His motto was to educate them in the proper way whereby they would, in the name of Servants of God, visit every corner of the country to meet people and to tell them about God, His grace, devotion and morality, thus propagating the Vaiṣṇava faith. This job needed somebody who was ready to move with all kinds of people, who did not differentiate between human beings, who did not care about being even insulted or humiliated, who did not desire wealth, who considered morality

and devotion to the Lord alone is their wealth. They had to be totally dedicated to the propagation of the Bhāgavata-faith. Vyāsarāya found such qualities in Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa and taught them the duties of a servant of God (Haridāsa). Among his disciples Purandaradāsa, Kanakadāsa and Vādirāja were most famous. The first two sang the glory of the Lord in simple Kannada whereas the other disciple Sri Vādirāja, a Saṁyāsīn, composed both in Kannada and Sanskrit. It is because of these three principal disciples (and many other less known disciples) that Vyāsarāya became very famous. Through Vyāsarāya, Bhāgavata faith spread throughout Karnataka in a very short period.

Vyāsarāya's own mission:

Apart from being a teacher, Vyāsarāya himself was a great composer. He composed a few works in Sanskrit and sang a few songs in Kannada as well. His guru was Śrī Brahmanyatīrtha and in later years Śrī Śrīpādarāja. He lived in Muḷubāgilu (modern Kolar District) for some time, then in Śrīraṅgam and Tirupati for some time and finally settled in Hampi. He was greatly respected by the kings of Vijayanagara, especially by the great Kṛṣṇadevarāya. Vyāsarāya once by officiating on the throne is supposed to have removed a certain bad omen that would have had befallen Kṛṣṇadevarāya had he been reigning ^{at} that particular period. Śrī Vyāsarāya lived between the second half of the 15th century and first half of the 16th cent. A.D.

Vyāsarāya was one of the great devotees of Kṛṣṇa and his heart would melt when he concentrated his mind on his Lord. His compositions, though not many in number, are really worth noting for their elegance of style and depth of the love of God. He worshipped God outside with form and also the one who is within. The dāsas recognise him outside with form though they know He is within as

well. In the last stage of a song which contains the above idea

Vyāsarāya utters:

What need is there for an external means
and what need is there for an external form?
What need is there for separate hymns and paths?
When I have got all necessary things within
I worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa with all my love. (10)

Saying so he worships the God within. Here are one or two songs of Śrī Vyāsarāya on Lord Kṛṣṇa in his childhood. As already mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, to these devotees Kṛṣṇa is the pivot around whom the circle of morality, religion, culture, devotion, etc., revolves. Through the well-known childhood incidents of Kṛṣṇa they have successfully attempted to revive Kṛṣṇa Bhakti otherwise called the Bhāgavata Dharma or Vaiṣṇavism. Here is an example of such a theme in the song 'enabedaḷō raṅga ...'

Whatever can I beg of you O Lord of Lords, Ranga,
Do you really possess any, O Lord sublime?

Ocean an abode, with a banyan leaf to recline,
Can I ask you for a house?
Seek I damsels from you, you, a celibate?
For Friendship if I seek you there you are in every thought!
You, a butter-stealer - ask I food from you?

Me to ask you for jewels - bejewelled in peacock
feathers and Tulasī leaves?
And a cow-herd you are, to ask for an army!
If I seek you for beauty, you shimmer like rain
laden clouds,
For me to be clothed seek I of you a garment-stealer?

You spent all your energy consorting with the Gopis, and
Distributed devotion among the loyal ones.
Let me have that bride of salvation, O Kṛṣṇa,
You have deceived and hid from all your devotees! (11)

The devotee is making fun of his Lord by singing his greatness and his likeable qualities in the pretext of scolding him. He takes it

10) R.R. Divākara - Haribhakti Sudhā, Song 167, verse 5.

11) R.R. Divākara - Haribhakti Sudhā, Song 134.

to be his right to make such an argument with his Lord whom he loves so intensely. All the stanzas in this song, in one way or the other reveal that Kṛṣṇa is a young boy. His life in Gokula-Brndāvana, mixing with the rustic cow-herds and playing with them, is intentionally used, because they highlight the essence of His love for his people (his people are none other than his devotees). The concluding sentence of this song is especially note-worthy for, it brings out Kṛṣṇa's mischievous nature of playing hide and seek and at the same time tells of his all powerfulness. While playing, hiding something is what children do, and when they are pleased and persuaded they bring out the hidden thing. Kṛṣṇa, as a child, has hidden something and his devotees know what it is! Hence the request.

In a caste-ridden society where Śivaśaraṇa's advocated against the system as such at least there must have been some people who did not take things happily. Though the Dvaita leaders preached that a man's character and conduct are more important than his caste, yet they could not for several reasons practise this. So one cannot find any mention of any other leader (or a follower) of the Vaiṣṇava school other than the orthodox brahmin during the time of Vyāsarāya. The kings who ruled the country during these periods are also responsible for this attitude for they honoured and respected brahmins and the higher caste people and did not give importance to others. So the last word about religion or culture was in the hands of these upper caste people. The credit of discarding all this and giving importance to one's quality over the caste goes to Vyāsarāya for he took Kanakadāsa as his disciple.

Vādirāja.

Śrī Vādirāja was a contemporary of Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa and a little older member of Śrī Vyāsarāya's School. He is supposed to have lived after 1480 and before 1600. Vādirāja was a great Sanskrit scholar and his expertise could be seen in his

voluminous work Rukmiṇīśavijaya, the life episodes of Lord Kṛṣṇa in Sanskrit. He has also composed a few songs in Kannada. But his learning was reflected more in his Sanskrit compositions than his Kannada ones. His songs on Bālakṛṣṇa in Kannada gives certain clues as to what type of compositions were on their way in the Haridāsa literature by Purandaradāsa, Kanakadāsa and the others.

- A) Śrī Kṛṣṇa came playfully smiling,
Hurriedly to where, Yaśodā was.

Waking up in the early morning while churning the curds,
When the Gopis sang of his wonderful childhood play,
Seeing their eyes swimming in tears of joy and affection
Kṛṣṇa, Madananayya (12) came asking for butter.

Having played in every house with other children,
And having killed the arrogant demons,
Looking at his mother's face with love, hurriedly he held
Her Śari, asking for her breast. Thus Kṛṣṇa came.

He has curly hair and is bedecked with ornaments,
He is shining with a necklace of pearls.
With the tinkling sound of the belt tied to his feet,
Siriyarasa (13) Hayavadana, the beguiling one came. (14).

The fragrance of the childhood play and the atmosphere created by such a life of Kṛṣṇa is the subject of this song. Gopis are singing Kṛṣṇa's wonderful boyhood incidents and while doing so, out of joy and motherly feeling their eyes are brimming with tears. Kṛṣṇa comes right at that moment and asks for butter. He comes straight from playing and looking at his mother's place he asks her to breast-feed him. Little Kṛṣṇa is beautifully decorated and comes making tinkling sound from the bells tied to his feet. Each stanza gradually builds, and strengthens of the love of the listeners, thus establishing a

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- 12) Madana is Cupid and Ayya, father, hence Madananayya is father of the Cupid ie., Kṛṣṇa.
13) Siri is wealth, Lakṣmī and Arasa the Lord, so Siriyarasa the Lord of Wealth, is again Lord Kṛṣṇa.
14) T.N. Nāgaratna ed.; Vādirājara Kṛtigalu, song 109.

very strong relationship between them and Him.

B) Do not go to the houses of provocative Gopis, Rāṅga,
I beg you Govinda please do not go.

Gopi : Entering their houses, why should you
cause them trouble dear?

Kṛṣṇa : Listening to the clever words of the Gopis
Don't be angry with me with mother.

G : My little darling, the Gopis have come
and are complaining against you,

K : These Gopis are arrogant and so speak ill of me,
What shall I do mother?

G : Breaking their pots of milk and curds,
Why did you threaten them dear?

K : By the fights of their cats in the early morning,
The pots must have fallen down.

G : With all the children you played the bull-game
Won't your body get dirty?

K : The Gopis have, mother, with their unclean hands,
Smeared the dirt on me.

G : Come my dear the apple of my eyes,
Come my darling Kṛṣṇayya,
Uttering such words mother Yaśodā hugged
Hayavadana the Lord, Govinda.

(15)

C) I saw, yes I did, Kṛṣṇa, Your divine auspicious form,
I am blessed Kṛṣṇa, my Lord, please be compassionate to me.

Dressed in dhoti, with an armlet you are,
And bedecked in a jewel necklace,
A pair of golden sandals to the feet,
A mark of musk on forehead.

A smile that is gentle and those lovely teeth,
Your look from the corner of the eyes
The lovely looking curly hair,
And the sweet, sweet face of yours (I saw)

A cluster of jasmine flowers on your neck,
On the wrist on attractive bracelet,
You enjoyed yourself on Gopis breasts
Smiling with love all through.

When you, the brave, danced on the hood,
of Kaliya, the cruel one,
The God's showered a rain of flowers:
Away the demons ran.

My Lord has freed me from the worldly bondage,
My difficulties are all gone,
Why should I seek other deities?
You forgive me, Bless me, Hayavadana My Lord. (16)

The impact and influence of the lovely form of Bālakṛṣṇa the prime deity of Udupi could be seen in Vādirāja's compositions, especially in the song which starts with *kandē kandēnu*. The other song cleverly composed in the form of a conversation between Kṛṣṇa and Yaśodā depicts the image of Bālakṛṣṇa that the Haridāsa cherished in their hearts. This type of song which invariably takes the form of a dialogue is also found in Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa and other Haridāsas. The language is quite simple and the easy flow of ideas and homeliness indicates the direction the Haridāsa songs would take in the future.

16) T.N. Nāgaratna, ed.; Vādirāja Kṛtigalu, song 53.

10. OTHER VAISNAVA VOTARIES OF THE TIME.

These devotees are discussed at this point for they lie within the tradition of Vaiṣṇavism yet are not themselves Haridāśas. Some belong to a period anterior to the Haridāśas and some others lived as contemporaries.

Rudrabhaṭṭa.

Rudrabhaṭṭa of the 13th.C. A.D. is the first poet in the Karnataka to depict the Kṛṣṇa theme in his work Jagannāthavijaya. By his name and certain other aspects of his work, one may guess that Rudrabhaṭṭa was a Smārta brahmin. His name is a Śaivite one and his work Jagannāthavijaya - a Vaiṣṇava work, is a fine example of Śaiva-Vaiṣṇava combination. That he did not find much difference between Viṣṇu (Kṛṣṇa) and Śiva is evident from his work (1). It ends with the blessings of Viṣṇu and Śiva to devotees, which adds to the above-said point. There had been several Jaina works wherein one can find references to the life of Lord Kṛṣṇa, but these references only add to their Jaina themes (2). Kṛṣṇa gets a secondary place in these works and hence they are not of much importance with regard to the present thesis. Rudrabhaṭṭa is also first among those who have sung the glory of Kṛṣṇa's childhood and boyhood in Kannada. This aspect of Kṛṣṇa in Rudrabhaṭṭa is of some relevance for the present study.

Kṛṣṇa's boyhood incident gained momentum during the time of the Bhāgavatapurāṇa (10th.C. A.D.) and spread to all other local languages for it contained the very natural human element of love, including love for babies and children. It is like a mirror to the nature of children and hence it attracted large masses in a very short period. In Kannada, the very beginning of written literature is available only from the 9th.C. A.D. or so. There is not much

1) Rudrabhaṭṭa, Śrīkṛṣṇāvatāra, ed. by K.G. Śāstri, p.35, verse 14
p.55, verse 32.

2) For example the role of Kṛṣṇa in Pampa's Vikramārjunavijaya.

evidence to show what prevailed there earlier with regard to Kṛṣṇa-Bhakti literature. So Rudrabhaṭṭa may be considered as the first poet on Kṛṣṇa-Bhakti literature in Kannada.

Rudrabhaṭṭa is a poet in the first instance and a devotee next. Even in his work the poet in him scores over his Bhakti. His inclination is more towards satisfying the pundits well-versed in prosody by bringing all its details in his work. So Bhakti gets a secondary position here. This work is not composed with the common lot in mind, and hence it lacks the revolutionary zeal of bringing all people together in its fold of Bhakti. To Rudrabhaṭṭa, Kṛṣṇa's life became a means of bringing out his own proficiency as a poet. His intention of giving a scholarly work to the Kannada people was fulfilled but it did not reach all parts of society. May be this was not his idea. In general people were religious and God-fearing during this period and the life of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa and other Epic and Purāṇic characters were familiar to one and all. So Rudrabhaṭṭa selected Kṛṣṇa's life and composed his work.

During Rudrabhaṭṭa's time the Campū style of writing, alternating prose and verse, was famous and so he too selected the same style. Being strictly orthodox he had to stick to the rules of prosody, so he lost many interesting points which he could have brought out had he been a little less rigid. His diction is highly sanskritised and not in a popular idiom. So his work even today has remained a work for pundits. Though certain scholars have tried to popularise this work by pointing out Rudrabhaṭṭa's scholarship and his ability to use simple elegant Kannada, their efforts have not been very successful.

Rudrabhaṭṭa has dealt with Kṛṣṇa's Bālalīlā quite well. His poetic ability and genius, which have shone here and there in the faltering words of a child, a boy, are sources of joy to one and all. These descriptions take one nearer to the Lord and cause one to commune with Him intimately.

Some examples:

The poet has established his devotion to Kṛṣṇa from the very beginning words wherein he says:

"Let Kṛṣṇa who rejoiced at reducing the burden of mother earth bring joy to us". (3)

"Even while moving falteringly from one step to another, Hari appeared as though he was not to forget the instinct of his strides as Vāmana and thus he caused wonder to one and all"(4). Now Kṛṣṇa has grown up a little and is a little boy now. "While churning butter-milk, the full-breasted Gopi engaged herself in some household duties. Kṛṣṇa at this moment entered stealthily, ensuring his anklets made no sound, and he greedily scooped up handfuls of butter and was eating in a hurry. Yaśodā saw this and remarked, 'Here, I see you; I see you stealing'. Kṛṣṇa suddenly wiped off the residue of butter sticking to his mouth, drew back and ran away". (5)

Here are two more verses which in short give the whole of Kṛṣṇa's childhood and boyhood. This summarises the feeling of Kannada people towards an infant.

He who is cloud and water lily coloured, played;
He who has eyes like lotus flower, played;
He whose beautiful smile is hypnotic he played;
He whose form is auspicious, played".
Talking thus as the gopis caused him to play,
He, Balākṛṣṇa the director of this worldly life,
Played and danced clapping his hands. (6)

He who is covetous of milk, he played;
He the smart little butter-thief, played;
He the champion of the children, played;
He the protector of Gokula, played .

3) R. Shama Sastry, ed.; Jagannāthavijayam, p.1, verse 1.

4) R. Shama Sastry, ed.; Jagannāthavijayam, p.55, verse 42.

5) R. Shama Sastry, ed.; Jagannāthavijayam, p.57, verse 51.

6) R. Shama Sastry, ed.; Jagannāthavijayam, p.58, verse 54.

Talking thus as the gopis caused him to play,
He, little Kṛṣṇa, the director of this worldly life,
Played and danced clapping his hands! (7)

Rudrabhaṭṭa has made use of Sanskrit words in abundance for the free flow of his thoughts. But here and there he has proved that even simple Kannada is equally capable of expressing one's feelings. He has brought Kṛṣṇa from the Viṣṇupurāṇa and made him accessible to more Kannada people. Probably from this point of view Purandara-dāsa and the other Haridāsas have been influenced by Rudrabhaṭṭa. It is a fact that the Haridāsas were influenced by the Śivaśāraṇas as far as spreading Bhakti and cleansing the impurities of society are concerned, in simple and elegant Kannada, the language of the masses. This being the case Rudrabhaṭṭa, a contemporary Vaiṣṇava poet (12th and 13th.C. A.D) also must have had some influence on the Haridāsas.

While these pictures of Kṛṣṇa given by Rudrabhaṭṭa bring joy to the readers, in the mind of the people in Karnataka Jagannāthavijaya remains a Kāvya, and because of the complexity of the author's language and his staunch adherence to the rules of prosody, he did not become accessible to the masses. Hence even up to this day, his work remains the property of scholars.

Kumāravayāsa.

Kumāravayāsa is the most notable poet of Karnataka who lived around the 14th or 15th.C. A.D. He was a great Kṛṣṇa devotee and selected for his work, the later life of Kṛṣṇa with the Pāṇḍavas. As Kumāravayāsa's Kṛṣṇa is a grown up, elderly and respectable person, the study of his work is not of much importance here. One does not get authentic information regarding Kṛṣṇa's boyhood activities in this work. But as a Bhakti Kāvya Kumāravayāsabhārata otherwise known as Gadugina-Bhārata or Karṇāṭa Bhārata Kathāmanjari is well known all over Karnataka.

To Kumārvyāsa Kṛṣṇa is everything. Both he and Purandaradāsa are similar in their ecstasy of devotion. But Kumārvyāsa's ideal ^{the} is ^{an}elderly Kṛṣṇa and Purandara's, Bālakṛṣṇa. In their emotional outbursts, in their depth of devotion to the Lord, in their conception of the beauty of the Lord and the like one can see the identity between Kumārvyāsa and Haridāsa. In all other aspects they both stay apart for the reason stated above.

Though Kumārvyāsa wrote his work just like Rudrabhaṭṭa, moving on the lines of a professional poet, he is different from other poets in his approach. He was a great lover of Kṛṣṇa and whatever happened in the Mahābhārata to him, it had the influence of Kṛṣṇa. He saw Kṛṣṇa in every step of the Epic. So to suit his idea he has altered the story of Mahābhārata and has increased the greatness of his Lord Kṛṣṇa. When Kṛṣṇa comes on the scene he becomes exhilarated and uncontrollable, and in ecstasy sings innumerable verses which are the results of his depth of devotion. When one examines these, one finds that they are remarkable for their sincerity, elegance of language and musical quality, with Bhakti always underlying them (8).

Kumārvyāsabhārata has remained very popular in Karnataka. In this work the greatness of Bhakti and its various aspects are depicted in such a way that even common people are able to appreciate and get themselves involved in it. His influence on the masses of Karnataka in itself is a proof of his greatness. He has shone in the galaxy of the poets of Karnataka as a great star, more than that, as a great devotee.

Caṇḍarasa:

A poet by this name lived in Karnataka around ^{the} 14th.C. A.D. and most probably was a contemporary of Kumārvyāsa. He was a Vaisnava and a Brahmin poet. Very few details are known about where and when he lived. He has translated

8) Masti Venkatesa Iyengar, K.V. Puttappa, eds.; Karnāta Bhārata Kathāmanjari, p.143-144, verses 109 to 129, p.330-331, verses 6-19

the Sanskrit work Daśakumāracaritam of Daṇḍin into Kannada in Campū style. An interesting point regarding this work is that the poet offers his salutation to his chosen deity Viṣṇu by invoking his name Abhanga-Viṭhala at the end of each chapter. As Haridāsa were also Viṭhala-Bhaktas, this throws some more light on the Viṭhala-Bhakti tradition of Karnataka devotees, which had strong followers even before the famous Haridāsa appeared on the scene. This is the only significant point of Caṇḍarasa and his work Abhinavadaśakumāracaritē with regard to the present thesis.

Nityātmaśukayogi

Nityātmaśukayogi, a Vaiṣṇava poet lived in Karnataka around 1530 A.D(9). Kannāḍa-Bhāgavata is his voluminous work in Bhāminīṣaṭpadī style which traditionally follows the Sanskrit Bhāgavatapurāṇa in Kannada. Though he also lived most probably as a contemporary of Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa, his name is not well-known. May be because of Kumāravāsa's popularity the appeal to the Kannada masses of his work was very limited. His lesser popularity may also be due to the fact that his composition on Kṛṣṇa was in a kavya style and the people who were used to simple and heart-touching songs of the Haridāsa were not attracted towards this work.

The Kannāḍa-Bhāgavata is almost a translation of the Bhāgavatapurāṇa. There are instances where one cannot but admire the poet for his lively expressions wherein Kṛṣṇa has appeared in beautiful colours.

While playing, now falling, now getting up in mire
the boys of the Yādava race were pulling the tails of young
calves and were even being dragged by them (10)

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- 9) Previously scholars were not sure of the name of the person who composed the Kannāḍa-Bhāgavata. Cāṭuviṭhalanātha was one with whom the authorship of the above work was identified by some people.
- 10) Kannāḍa Bhāgavata X-8-10a.

This reveals how little-Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were delightfully playing in Gokula. In Indian villages children playing with cows and pulling their tails is a common sight. Such a description in a composition invokes among people a love for Kṛṣṇa. A similar scene of a village and its natural way of life is depicted in the following verse where Kṛṣṇa is being taught to walk, to eat, to speak:

He who directs the three worlds,
Holding his fingers she teaches him how to walk,
He who is the essence of all the Vedas and knowledge,
To him she teaches how to speak
To him who is blissful and satisfied by nature,
The wife of Nanda teaches how to eat,
By giving him milk and butter time and again. (11)

Thus here and there, there are excellent verses but much of it is lost in its narration. In some parts of this voluminous work Sanskrit words are found in abundance and this may also have added to its restricted popularity. To be frank, none of the kāvya type compositions have appealed to the masses, perhaps with the possible exception of Kumaravyāsa's and Pampa's compositions when compared to the simple elegant and short renderings of the Śivaśaraṇas (12), the Haridāśas, Sarvajña and the folk songs. The most important point regarding the Kannada Bhāgavata is that it is the only Kannada work which gives the complete life of Kṛṣṇa.

11) Kannada Bhāgavata, X-8-18

12) Śivaśaraṇas of Karnataka are better known by the name Vīraśaivas.

11. INTRODUCTION TO THE COMPOSITIONS OF PURANDARADĀSA AND KANAKADĀSA.

The majority of the Haridāsas were well-versed in all the scriptures, the Ēpics, and the Purāṇas, which becomes evident from the range of subjects they have covered in their songs. Vedic hymns, Upaniṣadic sayings, the teachings of the Ġitā, and the stories of the Purāṇas, are all embedded in their compositions in fluent, easy, and elegant Kannada. Their purposes were a) surrendering the self to Lord Hari, the result of deepest devotion to Him. These Haridasas appeal, beg, cry, pray, deride, criticise themselves and sing just to reveal his greatness, to evoke the zeal of Bhakti and to surrender the self to Him; b) practicing morality and simple and religiously devoted life based on Madhva's Dvaita philosophy. c) Their further objective was also to steer society in the right path. It is clear that an ordinary everyday and universal formula cannot be enunciated for spritual progress. It appears right when R.S.Panchamukhi says "Science aims at an exact and detailed knowledge of the universe through actual observation and inductive thinking. There is no place for faith in this enquiry".(1) Finally d) they wanted to educate people towards the role of music in one's life.

From the Epics and the Purāṇas it becomes clear that Kṛṣṇa was the supreme goal to devotees like Bhisma, the Pāṇḍavas, Prahlāda, Dhruva and many others. These devotees in turn became a source of strength to the later devotees such as Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa, therefore proving that devotion to one's Lord is fruitful. These devotees should give strength to the present day world with its materialistic preoccupations.

The mission of these Haridāsas was also to sow the seeds of a good relationship among the different groups of people in society, while respecting their beliefs, showing toleration, and

1) R.S. Pancamukhi, Karnātakada Haridāsa Sāhitya, p.XXXVI

spreading the light of devotion; all this they meant to achieve through their songs. These were only some of the self-appointed tasks the Haridāśas undertook and they succeeded to a great extent; no simple matter at a time when the caste-system was very strong.

The meaning of the very word Haridāśa is the 'servant of Hari'. Though there are many songs by the Haridāśas dealing with philosophical and other subject matters, the songs on Hari, i.e. Kṛṣṇa and his incarnations, are quite numerous and significant as well. Amongst the latter, the songs on Kṛṣṇāvatāra are more prolific than on any other Avatāra. The reason may be that the other incarnations of the Lord except Rāma were not that popular or appealing to the hearts of men. In the Rāmāvatāra the Lord was born in a Royal (warrior) family and His life is such that the devotee feels an enormous respect towards Him. But, at the outset, the devotee with all his human failings feels the enormous distance between himself and a Prince as heroic and exemplary as Lord Rāma. With regard to Kṛṣṇa's life nobody senses such a difference. A feeling of intimacy is evoked in placing the devotee-Kṛṣṇa relationship on the planes of mother-baby, mother-child, friend-friend and lover-beloved. Thus, even though there is respect between God and devotee, it never interferes with the close and affectionate relationship with the Lord. The devotee feels that he has complete freedom to adopt any attitude he wishes. Moreover it is the icon of Bālakṛṣṇa that was installed at Udupi by Madhva, the founder of the Dvaita school. These are some of the reasons for the popularity of Kṛṣṇabhakti. These facts are reflected in the much more extensive appearance in literature of poems or songs addressed to Kṛṣṇa. There could hardly be anybody who does not enjoy the childhood incidents of Lord Kṛṣṇa. This portion of Kṛṣṇa's life is the one which is prominent in the songs of the Haridāśas of Karnataka.

Though this method of singing the glory of the Lord was quite popular in Karnataka before Purandaradāsa and other Haridāsas appeared on the scene, Purandaradāsa may be called the one who earned a great respect to the whole group of the Haridāsas, by his originality and simplicity, mixed with his depth of devotion. At present these songs of the Haridāsas are termed Kṛti. Kṛti is a specific word to denote a certain type of composition which is set to music according to the traditional definition. Probably the use of this word Kṛti is a later classification as far as the songs of Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa are concerned. During the time when Purandara and Kanaka lived, probably such songs were more commonly termed Pada, Devaranāma and Hāḍu, 'songs', the most common form of verses which prevailed among the folk people (2). Anonymous folk-songs were popularly sung and were known as Janapada-Hāḍugaḷu. The compositions of the Haridāsas which incorporated the force and style of the folk songs in certain aspects were then probably called Dāsa-Hāḍugaḷu, Dāsara Padagaḷu, 'the songs of the Dāsas'. The songs also had the necessary structure for a kīrtana which in turn has influenced the later musicologists to include these under the well-known category of classical Kīrtanas.

Music:

Incidentally a small note on music would be useful. If textual sources are to be believed, prior to the 14th.C. A.D. there prevailed one tradition of classical music in India. Terms for 'Karnatic music' and 'Hindustani music' appear for the first time in Haripāla's Saṅgīta-Sudhākara, a 14th century work. In North India, as a result of influences of Persian culture under the Mughal kings, the court music there acquired the name 'Hindustani music'. That of the south was termed 'Karnatic music' for it flourished under the patronage of the Hoysala and Vijayanagara kings.

2) Of course these were sung bearing in mind that they catered for unscholarly and naive people.

The period between the 13th and 16th.C. A.D. may be called the medieval period of Karnatic music and texts are our sole evidence for it (3). The 'modern' Karnatic music began after this, at the time of the famous mystic composer Purandaradāsa of the 16th.C. A.D. As classical music was gradually developing, the music that prevailed during the time of these Haridāsas was purely devotional. The difference between classical music and devotional songs can be described as follows: The Raga in classical music is selected as appropriate to the mood and emotion of the particular composition. It is then expanded to suit the rhythm and intricacies of a classical style. It is left to the singer's expertise and maturity to bring out the subtle aspects of technique combined with emotion. Devotional songs emphasise particular feelings in each song without the technical trimmings, so they are sung in popular and easy tunes. They are thus direct and are involved in the emotional outburst of the devotional subject matter and less concerned with musical technicalities, than say, the kṛtis of Muthuswami Dikshitar, which though descriptive^{of} forms of God or goddess, are regarded first and foremost as 'musicians' music. Purandara's songs are the crown-jewels of devotional music.

Purandaradāsa - His ^LLife and Mission.

Occasionally great men have from time immemorial appeared on the world scene. A number of these men have lived the life of ordinary people gradually developing spiritually and by their life-style incorporated all^{that} is good. Through coincidence or otherwise, the appearance of such people has resulted in the safeguarding of religions and cultures when such religions and cultures were faced^{with} trouble from certain external or internal conflicts.

3) Examples are: Rāmāmātya, Svaramelakalānidhi (1550 A.D.) and Veṅkatamakhi, Caturdaṇḍīprakāśikā (17th.C. A.D.) that effectively witness the growth of the southern 'differentiation' system.

Purandaradāsa is one of these reformers.

Purandaradāsa, formerly known as Śrīnivāsa Nāyaka, belonged to the Southern State of Karnataka in India. From his songs and from the songs of his contemporary Haridāśas and also from the traditional stories that still prevail among the villages in Karnataka it is evident that he belonged to a family of businessmen. His father was a successful gold merchant, and Śrīnivāsa Nāyaka, an intelligent boy, mastered the family business and eventually inherited it. He became very rich in no time. Though the Nāyaka belonged to an orthodox Vaiṣṇava family, it seems that his obsession for making money had pushed aside all aspects of his religious life. Purandara had a wife called Sarasvatī who was nobility personified. She made up for the failings of her husband. It seems that the more money the Nāyaka earned the more miserly he became. He was completely occupied in amassing wealth and there was no place in his mind for anything else. This must have caused a great deal of distress to his wife Sarasvatī and perhaps she was praying to god all the time to change the worldly attitude of her husband.

It appears from the family background and also their status in society that the Nāyaka was a well-educated man with a good knowledge of music and the scriptures. An incident is related and popularly believed, which is said to have caused a complete change in the Nāyaka's life style.

Once a poor Brahmin came to the Nāyaka's shop and begged for help to celebrate the Upanayana, the putting on of the sacred thread, of his son. The merchant turned him out several times, but the Brahmin was back with his pitiable but persuasive face. At last the Nāyaka, angered by his visitations, flung at him an old invalid coin. The Brahmin left the shop and he went straight to Nāyaka's house. There his wife Sarasvatī, who must have heard

the story of the Brahmin's plight at the hands of her husband, gave her nose-ring which was the only thing she could claim as her own. Strangely (deliberately?), the Brahmin went straight back to the Nāyaka's shop seeking to exchange the ring for money. The Nāyaka was astounded to see the jewel in the possession of this Brahmin. Knowing the jewel to be his wife's he became suspicious. Putting the ornament in the safe, he asked the Brahmin to wait and rushed to his house. Sarasvatī was concerned to see her husband in the house at such an odd hour. The Nāyaka ordered his wife to bring her nose ring. Her concern was justified and her husband was disturbed as he wanted her nose-ring immediately. She knew her impatient and angry husband too well. She also knew that he would not leave her alone until he had her nose-ring. In dire distress she felt her only alternative was to commit suicide. She asked her husband to wait and went inside as if to collect the jewel. Sarasvati went into the shrine, closed the doors and offered her final prayer to the Lord. She had a diamond ring. She powdered it and mixed it with holy water and lifted it up to drink. She heard a metallic sound and felt as if something fell into the cup; What did she find? Her nose ring which she had given to the Brahmin! She could not believe her eyes. She rushed to her husband and gave him the ring. How could such a man totally addicted to making gold and more gold be intuitive and sensitive^{to} such human emotions? Meanwhile hardly waiting for her to say anything the Nāyaka rushed to the shop. There was neither the nose-ring nor the Brahmin and he was completely nonplussed by this incident. He came home, and his wife was surprised to see the utter change that had come over him. That was a rare sight for her. At this point they probably exchanged their experiences. That must have been enough to change such a sensitive man as Śrīnivāsa Nāyaka.

The thought that he would have lost his wife for a mere nose-ring must have had a profound effect on him and this was accelerated by the strange happening such as the appearance of the nose-ring in the cup and the disappearance of both the Brahmin and the nose-ring from his shop. He surely must have started to realise where he was heading for. He was ashamed at the very thought of causing the poor Brahmin (4) to come to him several times for nothing. Now all these incidents collectively changed him completely. The Nāyaka realised the impermanence of wordly things and right then surrendered at the feet of the Lord, Viṭhala, the Lord of Lords.

Today, many people do not like to hear that the nose ring materialised in the cup from nowhere, and regard this as a pious fiction. But it was in a sense a miracle that such a miser as Purandaradāsa, who refused to part with even a single penny and who never hesitated to ask a poor Brahmin to come to him several times only to give him in the end an invalid coin, and who was on the verge of punishing his own wife Sarasvatī who was nobility personified, became in the end converted.

Śrīnivāsanāyaka, basically was a well-read and cultured man. But he reached the extreme point in his miserly behaviour. It is always true that when a man goes to extremes he becomes too vulnerable, and any experience he undergoes in that stage will bring a change. This change may be sometimes good. The Nāyaka's real self thus became free and the strange brahmin and his wife Sarasvati became mere instruments for this change. There are a few songs wherein one can see his repentance for the mean mentality that he showed towards the brahmin and wherein also he

4) Tradition maintains that this Brahmin who came begging for some help was none other than Lord Pāṇḍuraṅgviṭhala (Kṛṣṇa) who had come to grace the Nāyaka.

praises his wife (5). After these incidents it is said that the Nāyaka gave away all his belongings and with a begging-bowl in his hand started a new life (6). It is known that Śrīnivāsa Nāyaka had four children who were all pious like their parents.

The Nāyaka's was a vast experience of life. Though he could not give any attention to anything but wealth when he was a merchant, now all his past started to come back to him. He could clearly see the good and bad of life for he had experienced both. Now that he had taken to the path of a servant of God, it had given him an impetus to speak of the shortcomings of life with an authoritative voice. He soon decided that he had to understand more about the world and that he needed to know how best he could make use of the rest of his life. He also had realised that however much a man learnt about the world by his own experience, without a proper master to guide him his knowledge of things would be incomplete. Probably this was the time when he set forth for Hampi, the great

5) Whatever happened, it happened for good

This became an instrument for me to serve my Lord Śrīdhara.

To hold a stick and Tambura (to beg)

I used to feel ashamed

And I would nod my head.

Let wives prosper all over the world

for my wife made me hold

this stick and the Tambura

Song 111

Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds.; Sankīrṇa Sangraha

6) Here the author would like to recall a discussion he had during his field work with Bannanjē Govindācārya, a well-known scholar in Kannada and Sanskrit, regarding Purandaradāsa and Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Bannanjē, speaking about Purandaradāsa's life, said "there is a proverbial statement in Sanskrit .

yasyānugrahāmicchāmi tasya vittam harāmyaham /

'The Lord has said 'His wealth I take who needs my grace' ;
How true it is when one looks at the life of Purandaradāsa."

cultural and religious centre of that time. He had heard of Vyāsarāya and also of his school. Vyāsarāya welcomed him as if he was just waiting for the Nāyaka's arrival. Vyāsarāya felt that the Nāyaka would be an ideal disciple to propagate his principles and also the principles of Dvaita philosophy. Both of them felt that they were like-minded, and so it became very easy for Vyāsarāya to impart all he knew to the Nāyaka. Within a short period, the Nāyaka became Vyāsarāya's dearest disciple. The rigorous practice of becoming a real Haridāsa as preached by his master added a new dimension to the Nāyaka's life. When he reached the required stage of learning Vyāsarāya initiated him to the Haridāsa status asking him to use Purandaraviṭhala as his pen name. Now only, he became Purandaradāsa. The Dāsa started composing songs. He found that his master's teachings opened his inner eyes. His own experience and Vyāsarāya's teachings made him a complete Bhakta, devotee. So, he sang ...

Unless a man becomes his master's very slave (servant),
He does not attain salvation.
^{the} By mere study of the different scriptures, a man spoilt
all his devotion (7)

This marks the end of the second stage in Purandara's life. Now starts the third and final stage of his life as a minstrel to drive away the differences, to sow the seeds of love and to create bhakti in the hearts of men and women. Bhakti is invariably connected with love according to these dāsas.

The Final Stage.

Apart from himself being an ideal, social and religious being there were many different ways in which a Haridāsa could serve society at large. Many religious practices were being observed in a very crude and brutal form, during Purandara's time.

7) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭāgeri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds.; Ārtabhāva
introduction, p.6.



The structure popularly known
as Purandara-mantapa on
the bank of the river
Tunga-Bhadra at Hampi.

To some extent the priests exploited the innocence of the uneducated by sowing the seed of fear in their mind to create Bhakti towards their deities (8). This type of Bhakti, rooted in fear, had been prevalent in India possibly since the later Vedic times. Though time and again certain men and women have raised their voices against such inhuman rituals as have been practised, these still survive. / The caste system (9) was also one of the major impediments which led to the sufferings of certain groups of people for a long time. This disease of society needed a better treatment, and at the same time faith in Vedic religion, Epics, and Purāṇas had to be revived for they had suffered badly at the hands of Jainas and Śivaśaraṇas. Being Madhvaiteś, who are Viṣṇubhaktas, the Haridāśas carried out / their objectives with respect to their faith.

Being great Viṣṇu - Kṛṣṇa devotees, Purandara and other Haridāśas considered that Kṛṣṇa is the cause and effect of all the activities in the world and they saw such Kṛṣṇa in everything they did and to them it was Kṛṣṇa's grace (10). So, one inevitably finds in the concluding stanza of the songs of these Haridāśas that / the signature of the dāśa is in the form of a name of their chosen / deity, Lord Viṣṇu. This in a way constituted an offering of everything they did to their God.

Man passes through numerous stages in his life. Sometimes he is happy, sometimes not; at times he is angry, at other times he is cunning; sometimes he is selfish and at some other times he scolds others. The good and bad of all these moods and hundreds of others which occur in human life have become the source of inspiration

8) Worship of crude forms of deities like Māramma, Masaṇamma, Kāḷamma, Durgamma and the like were practised to please whom, animals were / killed. This could be seen even today in many Indian villages as well as in some of the cities.

9) In India caste is invariably connected with class.

10) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds.; Ārtabhāva, song 149.

for their songs to Purandaradāsa, Kanakadāsa and other Haridāsas. Wandering from village to village, talking to all races, and exchanging their views with them, these Haridasas studied their behaviour and life and have cleverly brought out suitable songs which fit well in everyone's life. Devotion, respect to elders, faith in one's religion, and repair of misunderstandings of caste were their main objectives. As the present thesis is restricted only to the devotional aspect, that too to Kṛṣṇabhakti as found in the childhood and boyhood songs of Kṛṣṇa by Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa, only a passing note on their other themes will be given.

Here is a song by Purandaradāsa on the principles of Dvaita philosophy.

The principles of Madhva doctrine - please do not give them up.
Do not ruin yourself by giving them up.

The path which teaches by comparison
That Lord Hari is the God supreme

Which shows the feet of the enemy of Mura
By driving away the fear of terrible death.

That which belongs to our lotus eyed Purandaraviṭhala
The one who is in both Brahma and Vāyu. (11)

The song in a nutshell gives the doctrine of Dvaita philosophy. The very first verse has the expression tāraṭamyadi "by differentiating". The Dvaitins maintain that there is ^a difference between Īśvara and Jīva, Jīva and Jīva, Jīva and Jaḍa, Jaḍa and Jaḍa, and Jaḍa and Īśvara. The second verse stresses the Bhakti aspect of this philosophy. The third one, by showing the secondary place of Brahma and Vayu, again establishes the supremacy of Lord Viṣṇu. The song is quoted here just to show that Purandaradāsa was a genuine follower of the teachings of Sri Madhvācārya and there are

11) R.R. Divākara, Haribhakti Sudhā, Song 221.

12) Īśvara - The Lord Supreme; Jīva - Individual;
Jaḍa - Inanimate thing.

many of such compositions which are composed mainly to popularise the Dvaita principles.

Kṛṣṇa theme:

There is hardly anyone who is not attracted towards the childhood of Kṛṣṇa. The history of the life of Kṛṣṇa has been very popular in India since time immemorial. It is true that the manner in which people showed their respect was different. During the later Vedic times, it was Viṣṇu who mostly dominated the thoughts of people and during the time of Epics it was Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, the 7th and 8th incarnations of Lord Viṣṇu, who became popular. Kṛṣṇa, as a boy, entered almost every nook and cranny of India and through his popularity venerated as God only after the compilation of the Bhāgavatapurāṇa. Of course, the emphasis on the early life of Kṛṣṇa was gaining momentum during the time the Harivaṃśa and the Viṣṇupurāṇa were being composed. But its full effect is felt definitely after the Bhāgavatapurāṇa.

It is very difficult to determine when and how the Indians started worshipping Visnu-Kṛṣṇa as one of the highest principles(13). As already discussed in the earlier chapters, only a probable account of what might have happened can be estimated with the limited sources available. There is no account of any other God-head playing with his devotees and living with them through his entire lifetime. Most of the gods whom Indians know are already mature and they always remained mature and there is less question of intimate relationships with them. All such gods remained at a respectful distance from their devotees (14). Kṛṣṇa's childhood and boyhood is unique in this respect that it brought the devotees ^a on par with their beloved god. The way Kṛṣṇa's boyhood has been

13) Lord Śiva being the other one.

14) With the possible exceptions of Lord Murukan, a popular child god mainly worshipped in the Draviḍa region (present-day Tamilnadu State), and to some extent Gaṇeśa.

depicted in the Bhāgavata leaves no doubt that there were many purposes behind the Lord taking such a form in the house of a cowherd: This has certainly helped to some extent to the mutual friendship of various castes.

No sooner did these incidents in the life of Kṛṣṇa spread all over the country than he became the darling of one and all and the folk-hero as well. Each regional language sang the glory of Lord Kṛṣṇa in its own way and thus its literature could not help but grow. The adolescence of Kṛṣṇa depicted nothing but a message of love and it was this love which brought different groups of people together under the same roof of Kṛṣṇabhakti. This message of the Lord, Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa understood well and worked extensively on this theme to bind people together in their fold of Kṛṣṇabhakti.

In India, even these days, it is the joint family system which is more common, especially in villages. Family bondage, love for each other's children has become a part of life in such families. In the villages, not only the joint family but the whole village works like an enlarged family and one can find a very close contact among them. The birth of any child is a great occasion for the whole village and everyone loves children and fondles them as if they were their own. Children are naturally liked by all. When the child is very active and mischievous people like it all the more. Further, when a baby boy is very charming, one can hear people saying 'he looks like little Kṛṣṇa': such is the impact of the Bhāgavata. So the Dāsas brought home the popular figure of Bāla-kṛṣṇa in the peoples own language giving form to their imagination. However much a child is loved, it cannot bind a society in its fold of love, unless there is something special about it. Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa brought this divine child Kṛṣṇa, towards whom all men and women had unerring, unending love. Perpetuating him ^{as} a baby and as a child, they succeeded in harmonising castes and societies.

But he was also God incarnate. So there is no question of him growing old on the one hand or running away from them either. His popularity among common folk is because Kṛṣṇa was, like them, a commoner who was born in a cowherd family, and lived a life like one of them. The impact of this aspect of Bālakṛṣṇa appears to be the greatest. Every Indian family witnessed the life of the baby Kṛṣṇa in their own home. Purandaradāsa succeeded in creating this intimacy between worshipper and the worshipped through his songs.

It is not always easy to be at the level of ordinary folk and to speak to them of a high principle in their own medium. It needs understanding, determination, devotion, dedication and at least some experience with such people. Apart from these, one has to be competent enough with regard to the knowledge of scriptures, the Epics and the Puranas. Fortunately, Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa had the required understanding and the determination, for they had lived and left their homes to serve the society at large. They had absolute devotion towards the Lord for they had considered His blessings as the greatest wealth which could be possessed. They learnt humility of how to be a Haridāsa from their guru Vyāsarāya with supreme dedication and lived such a life. They also had sufficient experience in life; Purandaradāsa was a merchant who had contacts with all kinds of people in society and Kanakadāsa came from a low class family and he had suffered at the hands of other people. Their songs ^{are} evidence that both of them were highly learned in their own ways. This is one of the reasons for the great popularity and impact of these two Haridāsas on the masses in Karnataka and neighbouring states as well.

12. PURANDARADĀSA'S BĀLAKṚṢṆA SONGS.

Some 47 songs of Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa have been taken to show how the Kṛṣṇa theme has been handled by these Dāsas. These songs could be classified and related to in different ways. As these songs on Kṛṣṇa have not been translated into English before and have not been treated critically either, the main objective of the present thesis is also towards such a translation and to show how Kṛṣṇa has come closer to the hearts of Kannada people. The songs have been classified according to the life of the child Kṛṣṇa starting from Gokula until he reaches Mathurā. There are a few songs with both narrative and Daśāvatāra themes, which are grouped separately.

For the sake of convenience the songs on young Kṛṣṇa (as a babe and as a boy) by Purandaradāsa may be grouped under different moods such as (a) little Kṛṣṇa as seen by his mother Yaśodā and the other gopis; (b) Kṛṣṇa as a growing boy with his numerous mischiefs; (c) Kṛṣṇa and Music; (d) Kṛṣṇa and the Gopis; (e) Songs that describe Kṛṣṇa's beauty and some narrative songs that include themes on the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu. Purandara's Kṛṣṇa, centred around Gokula-Bṛndāvana and finally Mathurā, is the topic under consideration. These songs are more on the psychological level, all the time appealing to the most vulnerable spot in people: the heart. Most of the descriptive elements of the narration of such incidents like killing the demons etc., as found in the Purāṇas have ended up with mere mention in passing and some of these which are more prominent have led themselves to philosophical interpretations (1). Human feelings and reactions have been the most extensively used aspect, and their essence has been exhaustively

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- 1) For example, Purandaradāsa does not elaborate on killing one demon or the other but a selective few like the subjugation of the serpent Kāliṅga which can be made synonymous with the controlling of senses which have been reiterated in his compositions.

exploited in all the compositions. The words chosen to form the Kannada text are appropriately suited to the age and mood of the subject matter. Thus, in a dialogue between a mother and a child, the mother's words are expressed with affection and love, yet maturity, while the child Kṛṣṇa's are expressed in a more natural infant language. Words exchanged between the lovers bring out the most suitable expressions from a lover's vocabulary. Every time Kṛṣṇa uses the appropriate and delightful idiom.

The manner in which Yaśodā cuddled and fondled her child Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa's childhood pranks have universal appeal. Yaśodā is tireless of playing with him. These songs describe every situation connected with Kṛṣṇa's life and living in the most natural way, as anyone would experience in a child's infancy.. The reader feels a kind of involvement even when merely reading them, as they are observations of common experiences in every house with children. The devotion and love of the poet flows in such a way that he forgets himself and identifies himself with Yaśodā or Kṛṣṇa, or one of the Gopis or any other character in the life episodes of Kṛṣṇa. The poet is not at all tired of describing the different incidents connected with Kṛṣṇa's life, whether of his birth, babyhood, childhood, or youth. This is also true of the poets' handling of other incarnations of Viṣṇu. The appeal is on the fresh presentation of well-rehearsed material. The incidents in the life of Kṛṣṇa are deeply-embedded in the affectionate hearts of the audience. The small and simple words used, are such that they reveal the whole picture of the episode with which they are connected with their tremendous suggestive power. The devotee may describe one episode in one song or in more than one song or he may incorporate several episodes in a single song.

Kṛṣṇa the little one.

Here are some of Purandaradāsa's songs on little Kṛṣṇa. These songs, as would be seen, may not very strictly follow the classification group which has been mentioned earlier. As Indian devotees and poets give hardly any attention to time-measure, especially when they speak about their lord, a song may contain the sentiment of parental love at the beginning, and gradually it may explain a completely different mood, now the Lord may be crawling on his knees and the next moment he would be making love with the gopis. Such seeming anachronism may creep in, in many of the songs. Keeping this also in mind, these songs have been classified so as to give the reader at least an idea of the different stages of Kṛṣṇa's growth from his childhood until he reached Mathurā.

There follows a song of Purandaradāsa which is most famous in Karnataka and elsewhere. It depicts the wonder of the devotee at the meritorious Yaśodā who played with the little Lord thinking him to be her son.

- A) Yaśodā cuddled Kṛṣṇa who is known through the scriptures,
Thinking him to be her son - the uplifter of the universe.

Sleeping on a banyan leaf
He who licks his tiny toe

The all eyed one and the omnifaced one,
The one who is spread, all over the world (1)

He is smaller than the smallest,
And greater than the greatest
Him, who is beyond all the measures, Yaśodā cuddled. (2)

He is beyond the scriptures,
His grace, of course, is endless,
He is the crown jewel of little ones,
Him, thinking to be her son, Yaśodā cuddled.

1) cf. R.V. X-81-3; R.V. X-90-1 and Sv.U. III-3

2) cf. Sv.U. III-20 and Mh.N.U. VIII-3

He is within every one, who is
The Lord of Goddess Lakṣmī
Him, the Purandaraviṭhala - she cuddled. (3)

The visual effect the Dāsa has brought out in describing the contrast between a mother so human and the lord with countless qualities is noteworthy. What the singers or readers know and are smiling at, is completely unknown to Yaśodā. This natural picture of Kṛṣṇa playing with his mother Yaśodā is extremely touching and profoundly beautiful.

B) Bring some fruit and butter - Gopi
bring a few fruits and butter.

(bring them) To the hand which killed the demon in
the forest;
To the hand which cut the crocodile in the tank;
To the hand which played with the ball in the forest;
To that hand which was stretched hastily to the land ..

(bring the butter)
To the hand which holds the conch and the wheel,
To that which, unhesitantly killed his uncle,
To the hand which plays on the flute with pride,
To such a hand which makes the beautiful gopis dance.

(bring the fruits)
To the hand which boldly lifted the hill,
To the hand which stretched out for the earth (to
be given as charity);
To the hand which killed the wicked kings;
To the hand which destroyed the troublesome demons.

(bring butter and fruits)
To that hand which stirred up the deep water where
Kālīya lived;
To the hand which ruled 16,000 gopis together;
To that hand which unfailing, uplifted the devotees;
To the same hand which killed the seven bulls ..

(bring fruits and butter)
To the hand which held the bow and arrows,
To the hand which practised wrestlers' movements,
To the hand of Ranga, the Lord of Lords,
To the hand of the all-knowing Purandara-viṭhala (4)

This is a good example of the scholarship of Purandaradāsa and his way of making use of the different aspects of the original story. He has chosen only those instances where the Lord's hand has taken the major part. Every line ends with the word 'kaigē' meaning to the hand; the Dāsa's proficiency fits in the incidence relating to the hand quite effortlessly. In order to emphasise the tremendous significance of the power and grace of the Lord's hands Purandaradāsa has composed more than one song on the hands of the Lord and ideas have been repetitive, nevertheless neither the beauty of the individual poem nor the impact of the entire song has greatly suffered in the process.

The line binkadindali kolalūduva kaigē (Line 3, stanza 2), 'to the hands which play on the flute with pride' is especially noteworthy. The words binka (proudly) and kolalu (flute) go very well together and one's mind recollects the instances of Kṛṣṇa playing on the flute. Similarly the expression 'ēlla-devara deva raṅgana kaigē' (line 4, fifth stanza) is also one of the most appealing lines of this song. The name raṅga with its preceeding words ēlladevaradeva the 'Lord of Lords' leaves an inexplicable feeling of joy in one's mind. The impact could be due to the brevity of the words used to express such a profound being. For a Kṛṣṇa-devotee, the rest is negligible and such a line, or such a word itself is enough to rouse his Bhakti towards the Lord.

A different song tolu tolu ..(5) depicts mother Yaśodā holding little Kṛṣṇa's hands, asks the little one to swing his arms forward

4) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds., Kṛṣṇalīlē, song 16

5) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds., Kṛṣṇalīlē, song 13

and back while she also moves this side and that with him. While playing with their children, mothers usually hum familiar tunes. Unlike other children Kṛṣṇa had hundreds of wonderful achievements to his credit and so it was no problem to Yaśodā to play with him for a long time singing his glory. The incidents are well known, and the listeners' minds, well prepared, absorb this, relishing every line with more and more enthusiasm.

This song takes one's mind to the villages of India, and in particular Karnataka. There even today one can find mothers and grandmothers playing with their children and grandchildren. Holding the baby's hand and moving it hither and thither would be invariably one of their methods of fondling them. It is no wonder if one hears one of these songs of the Haridāśas at such occasions while mothers and grandmothers play with their babes.

C) The song below 'Lālisidaḷu magana' expresses the spontaneity of a mother feeling happy with her son.

Caressed her son,
Yaśodā caressed her son;

Bedecked his forehead and ears
And a ring on his finger she placed
Looking at the beauty of the body of the boy
The lady rejoiced greatly.

My dear child I give you creamy milk and curds;
Sleep my darling happily in my arms.

O'Purandaraviṭhala, the ruler of the universe
With your beautiful smile kiss me. (6)

Simple is the idea and simpler are the Words used to express it. To match the naturalness and simplicity of feeling, Purandara-dāsa has deliberately used a colloquial Kannada style which avoids the use of high Sanskrit words. The simplicity of the diction

6) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds.; Kṛṣṇalīlā, song 7

should not, however, blind the reader to the inner meaning of the attraction between the human and the divine. The language is of that sort to this day in Karnataka which would be used of a baby by its mother: a simple unsophisticated speech.

D) Kṛṣṇa is simply the most fascinating among all children. He is innocent, naughty and very clever. The present song tells how he was creating happiness for the gopis. All the gopis have come to Yaśodā and they report thus:

See Gopi, the amusements,
That Hari performs in Gokula are unequalled.

When I delightedly lift up Ranga,
And make him play in the forecourt,
Looking at the image of the moon, at once
He wants it to be placed in his open palms.

Lovingly, I brought a mirror,
And placed it in his hands so that my darling
could look (at his own image in it),
He asks us to call his reflection
And place him beside him.

Seeing the burning lamp and knowing not what it is,
He wants it tied to our sari's end to play with,
He asks us to take him, like the calves,
To the cows to suck their milk!

Looking this way and that,
At the painting on the wall,
He wants it to be placed beside him,
He wants us to hold its hand and pull it towards him!

By looking at the actions of Purandaraviṭhala,
Our joy is indeed increased, O young lady (Yaśodā),
He verily is the result of your good deed,
And is unlike any other boy on earth. (7)

Simplicity and beautiful imagination of the Dāsa have been blended in a remarkable way here. The innocence of Kṛṣṇa and his

eagerness have been extolled very naturally. The instances such as little Kṛṣṇa looking at the moon, looking at the mirror, looking at the lamp and pictures, and also his request to be taken to the cows to suck their milk, are delightfully naive. Here a few lines of A.A. Milne helps in visualising the beauty of Bālakṛṣṇa and his pranks "In real life very young children have an artless beauty, an innocent grace, an unstudied abandon of movement, which, taken together, make an appeal to our emotions similar in kind to that made by any other young and artless creatures" (8). The naturalness along with the knowledge that it is Kṛṣṇa who is there, acting as a child, brings great joy.

- E) O, how evil the eye has fallen on Gopālakṛṣṇa!
A bad and a sinful glance has fallen (upon him)

Having understood that her child is feeling hungry
When the Gopi was causing him to drink curds
The glances of hungry boys fell upon him,
And does he not drink curds because of this?

The Gopi gave a cup of milk,
Thinking Kṛṣṇa was feeling hungry
Does he not drink the milk given
Because the evil eyes of the bad boys had fallen upon him?

When the Gopi gave butter into his hand
As he, her darling, seemed to be hungry
Was it through the glaring of the small children at him
That the butter remained by him untasted?

He had put on his shirt and ring
And had applied collyrium to his eyes
At such Kṛṣṇa who was playing in the front yard
Was it the women who enviously stared?

Dressed in silk, hair braided with flowers
He put a tilaka on his beautiful forehead

8) A.A. Milne - The Christopher Robin Verses being 'When we were very young' and 'Now we are six', p.VI

Him, surely, the Lord Purandaraviṭhala,
the Gopis with their wide open eyes beheld. (9)

In India, ^{if} something bad happens, people attach it to some belief. In the above song we see the example of Kṛṣṇa, who was not eating at all though it was time for him to have some food and poor mother Yaśodā is worried. She thinks, like any village woman in India ~~do~~ even today, that some evil eye has befallen him. The song, in a lively way, reveals the mind of Yaśodā in particular, and of all mothers in general in trying to find out what might be the cause for her son's rejection of any food given. Yaśodā suspects Kṛṣṇa's friends, Kṛṣṇa's own actions of killing powerful demons and the gopis who passionately loved Kṛṣṇa; such is the affection of a mother.

F) Little Kṛṣṇa is speaking to his mother Yaśodā. The song concerns a prank of Kṛṣṇa and throws some light on the social life that prevailed at that time in Karnataka and which is also prevalent today.

Mother Yaśodā, please lift me on to your shoulder.

Do not warm up the water, mother;
Please I beg of you, do not give me an oil bath.
Mother I can't swallow hot rice and pickles,
But dates and butter I can eat.

Kṛṣṇa the thief, thus the Gopis call me
And they eat their food hurriedly (as if I would
snatch it away)
My mouth and teeth hurt from Gopis' bites on my cheek,
O mother these Gopis really kill me.

Don't go to sleep just like that, mother
O turn your face towards me, please !
Frightened as I am since I saw a small snake
Please talk to me once at least.

Please bring the star and give it to me
And bring me the moon as well !
Or feel the joy by kissing at least once
Purandaraviṭhala, the cynosure of eyes. (10)

Baby Kṛṣṇa has not allowed his mother to sleep and moreover it also appears from the song that he is trying to make his mother speak to him. Charming words, the eternal gift of children, are pouring forth from his little mouth, meamerising one and all. Children hate having an oil bath or indeed any other sort. The reason is that whatever care is taken, the soapnut powder used to take off the oil, when applied to one's body, enters the eyes and causes terrible smarting. Moreover, an oil bath takes a long time, and thus prevents the child from playing. That is why children always try in vain to avoid it. Mischievous Kṛṣṇa understood his mother's preparations and so was pleading with her not to give him such a bath. He was so fond of dry dates and butter that he cleverly refuses hot rice and pickles.

His complaint was that gopis would cause mischief by calling him a thief and would eat their food without giving him any (11). They would also bite his lips and cheeks and pinch his nose for he was unusually attractive and charming. Being unable to bear the pain of their pinching and biting, little Kṛṣṇa is complaining to his mother about them!

Perhaps Yaśodā was angry at her son and had slept with her face the other way, when little Kṛṣṇa pulled her shoulder, turning her towards him, and telling her that he was frightened at seeing a little snake (or is he just playing with her?).

Finally Kṛṣṇa asked his mother to bring the stars and moon

10) Purandaradāsakirtane, Part 2, song 195.

11) Maybe a self-defence by Kṛṣṇa in advance, in case the gopis came and reported his mischievous behaviour.

and to give them to him. Yaśodā was pretending to be angry by not heeding his words. Kṛṣṇa can never accept his defeat. Now he uses his unfailing trick by asking her, 'Mother, at least look at the face of your Purandaraviṭhala, the ever-charming one and feel at least once the taste of a kiss!' There is no need to say that Yasoda fondled him and took him to her bosom. Nowhere has the devotee used any word or sentence expressing Bhakti. All through, the reader would be smiling, and admiring the pranks of little Kṛṣṇa, for everybody, male or female, identifies with Yasoda. Vātsalyabhāva, parental love, pours from every heart.

Very simple and common ideas such as mothers compelling their little ones to have an oil bath and children trying to avoid things by their tricks; children complaining about their elders and using that as an excuse to get around their angry parents; or pretending they are afraid of something so as to gain attention and, finally such beautiful, physically impossible but incomparably touching expressions as asking for the stars and moon, all these have brought Kṛṣṇa into the house of every devotee.

G) How fortunate and meritorious you are, O Gopi!
 We have not seen such a boy as yours.

 This charming Gopāla we cannot attain
 Even in our thoughts - doubt this not.

 Merely by singing in praise of Sarasījanābha
 Our sins will all be destroyed.
 If we speak to him affectionately even once,
 Happiness will be ours.

 We are afraid of you in the village, and our
 neighbours
 May also speak ill of us (if we are seen together)
 But did anyone have the opportunity
 Of playing with him in the forest as did we?

Please call your son the Lord of our life;
He is the result of good merit (yours - ours - everyone's)
We swear upon you, Yaśodā,
We are not going without our Purandaraviṭhala (12)

The love of the gopis towards the child Kṛṣṇa has been depicted in this song. The way in which the gopis expressed their feelings show how much they had involved themselves in Kṛṣṇa's life. In every loving relationship at the human level there is a sexual element: In so far as the love between Kṛṣṇa and the gopis is depicted by analogy in human terms, there will be a sexual element but it should not be exaggerated or taken as the total of that relationship. Kṛṣṇa was just a small boy and the type of affection, love and attraction that the gopis felt towards him has the element of Vātsalya, women's love and affection towards the infant, as dominant theme.

Little children are liked by all. Kṛṣṇa was also a small child but there was something special in him which made others like him more than they would like their own selves. He was a dear son to all women and such was he that he would evoke motherly love in all women, and this would lead to their quarrelling among themselves to have him.

H) Giving an oil bath to children is an age-old practice in India. In a country which is naturally hot, this oil bath keeps them cool, and tightens the affectionate and tactile bond between a mother and her children. During the oil bath she cleans the body of her baby, and blesses the child.

In many ways Yaśodā blessed him
While smearing oil on Yadukulatilaka.

Let you live long, let you know all,
The ill-minded and wicked, let you kill,
Protect the kings, defeat demons,
Let you be the Lord of Hanumān.

Be you brave and be compassionate,
And be you the Lord of Rukmiṇī.
The father of Māra and the killer of Madhu,
And be you the Lord of Dvārāvati.

Let you be joyous and be eternal,
Killer of asuras and comforting too!
Be you Śrīnivāsa, be you Srīnidhi,
And be you the wise Purandaraviṭhala. (13)

This well-known idea of an oil bath, when sung with reference to Kṛṣṇa, takes on a new dimension for Kṛṣṇa is an incarnation of God. Such simple practices and customs in the everyday life of common people when attributed to Kṛṣṇa whom they considered to be their Lord will evoke the feeling Bhakti, love towards Him, thus serving the purpose of the Dasa .

I) Scaring little children to make them remain indoors is quite common throughout the world. Only the expression takes different forms in different places. This very appealing idea has been cleverly made use of ^{by} Purandaradāsa to bring about motherly anxiety in a particular song pogadirēlo raṅga bāgilimḍācēgē (14). Yaśodā is the mother and little Kṛṣṇa the child. The 'bogey men' who would take him away were none other than the Bhāgavata, Kṛṣṇa devotees. Yaśodā says "my darling - gods and sages are always in constant search for you. If you step out they would snatch you away."

Here there is an inner philosophical idea as well. Sages are meditating upon Kṛṣṇa's name with single-mindedness to find Him in their hearts. If He goes out, their concentration is broken and they loose Him from their heart and come frantically searching for Him outside. The intention of the devotee is that the sages and the learned, should not search for him outside, for as they know, He is within; at the same time the gopis and other devotees should not search for Him inside, for he is already there in human form.

13) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds.; Kṛṣṇalīlē, song 35.

14) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds.; Kṛṣṇalīlē, song 49

3) Once Kṛṣṇa was crying:

Why are you crying O Ranga
If you cry, the bogeyman will frighten you

Only seven days after your birth,
You killed the cruel Pūtānā,
For you held and sucked her poisonous breasts,
Did the evil-eye strike you? (i.e. has that caused
you to cry)

When you went to graze the cows,
And suddenly Indra poured rain,
You lifted the hill by your finger, so
Has your finger become sprained? (i.e. is that why
you are crying?)

In your boyish playfulness,
While playing with other cowherds,
You stirred the depth of Kālī (15)
So, is your leg hurting O Ranga (i.e. can you be
crying because of that pain?)

You are the son of Vasudeva,
And you killed the demon wrestlers,
As you killed the mighty Kāṁsa,
Are you hit by the evil eye of others (i.e. are you
crying because of that?)

O Cēnnigarāya - the Lord of Velāpura (Belur)
We seek your refuge,
O Ocean of compassion, devotee-protector,
Propitious Purandaraviṭhala (why are you crying?) (16)

A gopi is comforting baby Kṛṣṇa. She did not know why he was crying. She was musing as to the reason why. She was a little worried too. 'Why my dear, what happened?. If you cry the bogeymen will come and take you away. So, please do not cry my little one,' thus she spoke like any mother would. Perhaps she has baby Kṛṣṇa

15) A certain place in the river Yamunā.

16) Purandaradasarakīrtanē, Part 3, song 10.

on her lap and feeling her hands over his little body, utters these words.

The first ^acarṇa[®] tells how Kṛṣṇa killed Pūtanā and she wonders if the evil-eye has befallen him. Here one could recall a similar instance in the Bhāgavata where Kṛṣṇa killed Pūtanā. There it is said,-

.... bālasya sarvataḥ /
rakṣāṃ vidadhire samyaggopucchabhramaṇādibhiḥ // (17)

"They protected the child by waving the tail of the cows around him and by performing other similar rituals". Such a ritual, to ward off the evil eye is still practised in Karnataka. The song continues with the Govardhana Giridhāraṇa, the episode of the Bhāgavata where Kṛṣṇa brings down the pride of Lord Indra by protecting his villagers, holding the Govardhana mountain on his finger tip. She is asking little Kṛṣṇa whether his tiny finger is sprained because of this, and causing him to cry!

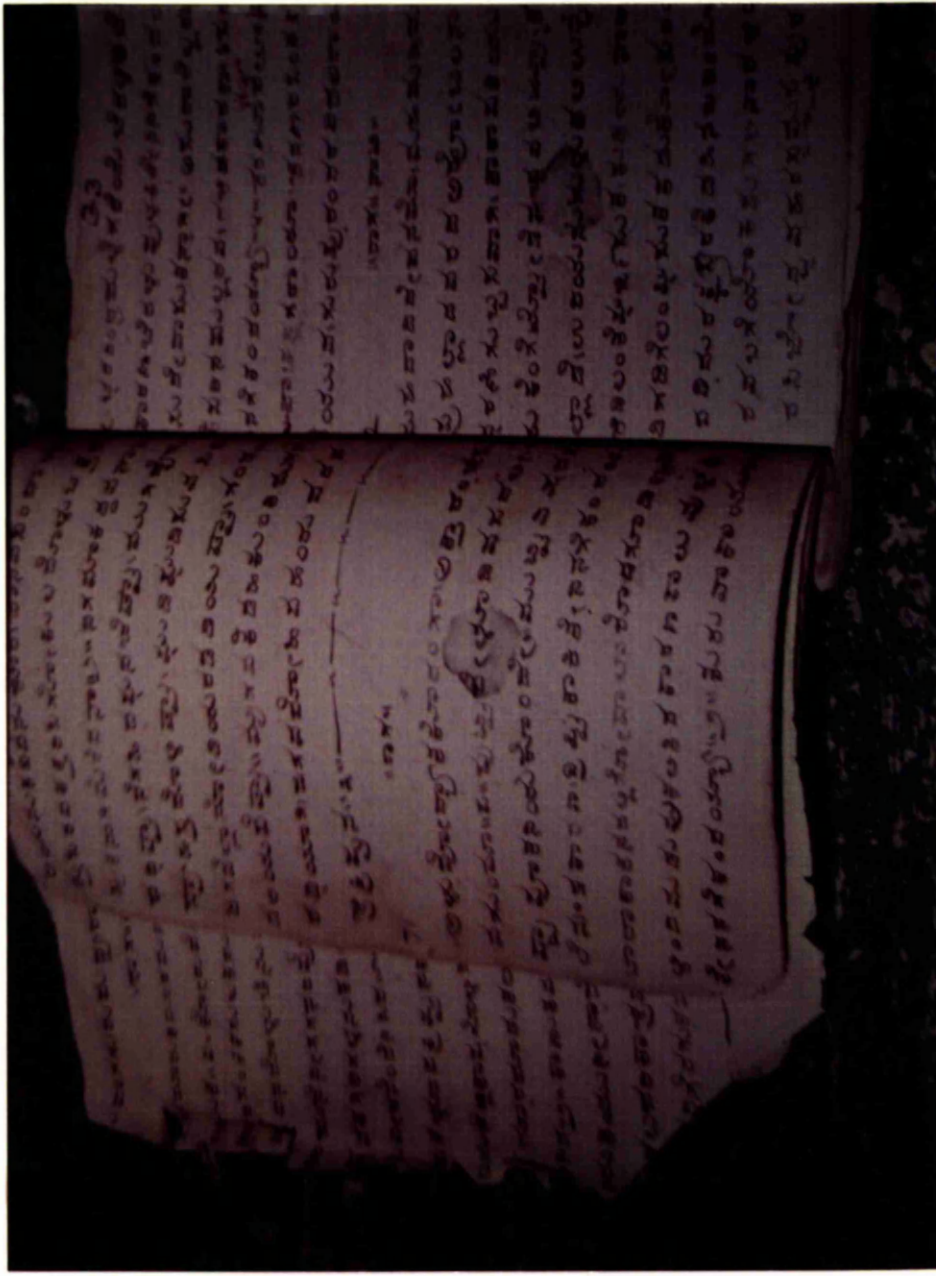
Then follows the incident of Kṛṣṇa taming the arrogant serpent Kālīya by dancing on his hoods. Are his legs hurting, for he danced on Kālīya? was her innocent question.

Kṛṣṇa killed Kāṃsa who was very strong. Many people witnessed that fight. Is it because some evil eye had befallen him that he was crying?

Finally when her Kṛṣṇa did not say (or could not say) why he was crying, she, like any worried mother, is literally begging Kṛṣṇa to tell her what was the reason for his crying. Kṛṣṇa is addressed here by his local name Cannigarāya, the presiding deity of Belur, a historical pilgrimage centre in Karnataka. It appears, in the song, there is a case of inner contradiction. Purandaradāsa who knows well the incidents of Kṛṣṇa's later life identifies himself

An old handwritten manuscript of Purandaradāsa's compositions. This particular page contains the song 'Ranga, why are you crying?', aḷuvudyaṭakō ranga. (see page 151)

(Courtesy: Institute of Kannada Studies, Mysore University, Mysore)



with Yaśodā or the gopi, who, at that point in her narrative of the Lord's life, would not have known. Yet, she utters the stories known to the author rather in a spirit of prophecy. The point is one of poetic licence.(18)

This is also one of the most famous songs of Purandaradāsa which even today is sung daily in hundreds of homes in Karnataka. Such songs are sung when common folk get their children to sleep, or to comfort them when they are crying, or just when they feel like singing. Baby Kṛṣṇa cannot talk yet, and he cries if he is hungry, he cries if he is hurt, he cries if he is bored by keeping in the same place. Thus he has expressed all his discomforts through his crying. This is common with regard to all children and all mothers have used such consoling words. Such sentiments are the very characters of society. When these are used as vehicles to express one's ideas people readily cling to them. It is so natural that no man or woman seems to be aware of such a reaction, a response which flows from their heart towards the object in question. The Dāsa has selected a common experience and has sung the glory of the Lord. The dramatic attraction of this theme lies in the fact that he connects the interesting divine incidents of Kṛṣṇa's life to the very natural causes of a child's crying. Thus the Haridāsa literature exploits sentimentality. Men and women are very vulnerable for sentiments and through these sentiments the Haridāsas fed the people with the highest philosophy: love for God and love for each other.

K) Yaśodā was waiting for Kṛṣṇa to come and drink milk and he has come at last. She finds him tired. A beautiful expression

18) Ancient poets and devotees have ignored the chronological order when they composed a song or sang a song. This is very true specially when the subject under consideration is their Lord. For them the Lord is beyond time, beyond limits, beyond all defects and so can manifest himself in an eternal present.

of motherly love may be seen here. The theme of the song is the natural way in which a mother would examine her child.

Dear child drink this milk!
Our Govinda, drink milk (for)
Ranga, you have come tired from Vṛndāvana.

Lovely-looking Govinda plays
Nicely on the sweet flute.
(so) Through the love of the Gopis is wan
The face of our Lord's auspicious form.

Our Śrīkānta with all his friends
Having wandered along with the cows
Has measured the whole earth; Hence
the feet of our protector are so weary.

All the pure-minded yogis are
Adoring your feet,
O Purandaraviṭhala, champion of the Yādavas,
The milk is losing its fresh taste. (19)

(.. so come and do drink milk)

Kṛṣṇa's face looks weary for he has come straight in from play. Yaśodā looks at him and thinks that it was due to the extreme love of the gopis whom Kṛṣṇa had attracted by his charm and the beautiful way of playing the flute. So in essence, she says 'my dear, your graceful form has withered due to the love of the gopis ..'

Then the eyes of Yāsodā fall on the delicate feet of Kṛṣṇa that looked very tired. She is solacing him by saying that his feet are tired, for he has, with his friends, followed the cows wherever they went. Also, he has measured the whole earth (in two steps). Hence her comforting invitation. Referring to the same feet she then recalls their sanctity. 'The pure-minded Yogis always meditate

19) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭāgeri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds.; Kṛṣṇalīlē, song 32.

upon your feet - O champion of the Yadus..' (20).

She may have felt his whole body with her hands, thus lessening his tiredness by her gentle touch and may have made him drink milk. This is the compelling picture of a mother's comfort to her child - an enchanting vision! There is a suggestion as to His Vāmanāvatara in the third line of the 2nd stanza, for he measured the whole world in only two steps nēlana īraḍimāḍi. It could have later become a proverbial expression applicable to all children who naturally roam about too much.

L) Whoever are you, the closer of mine eyes, tell me!
O little one - keeping quiet and pretending that I
do not know.

Are you the father of cupid in beauty? or
Are you the one praised by all scriptures?
Is it you who ruled the whole universe? or
Are you the one who forgave a hundred faults?

Are you the prince of lovely Gokula? or
Are you the redeemer of the crocodile?
Is it you of the shining nails and the one who
upheld the mountain? or
Are you the one who killed the demon Mura

Are you the epitome of the good and the auspicious? or
Are you the liberator of those who sing your glory?
Are you the very life of Gopis here? or
Are you the beautiful Śrīpati.

Is it you who appears to those who are in distress? or
Are you the sin-destroyer - Puruṣottama?
Are you the one who won the demons in your bow? or
the one who brought back Sāndīpani's son.

20) tadviṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padaṁ sadā paśyanti sūrayaḥ / R.V. I-22-20

"The Rsis with gifted insight, always look at the endless
blessed status of Viṣṇu".

Thus spoke the Gopi smilingly, then
Kṛṣṇa showed his Viṣṇu form to her.
Looking at the foe of demons and caressing him,
She said: 'You are not a child - Purandaraviṭhala, you are '
(21)

Little Kṛṣṇa's hide-and-seek has been the subject of a certain song - ñinārava ... Kṛṣṇa, little Kṛṣṇa quietly and slowly has come from behind and has closed Yaśodā's eyes. She knows it is her darling Kṛṣṇa. She also knows why Kṛṣṇa has come there. Still she sings asking whether he is that one or this one, actually referring to the incidents that took place in Kṛṣṇa's life. Finally Kṛṣṇa was overwhelmed with joy by his mother's loving words and showed her his real form. Yaśodā hugged and kissed Kṛṣṇa saying 'my darling you are not an ordinary child! You are the Lord of the Lords, you are Purandaraviṭhala'. C.S. Lewis in his book 'The four loves' while mentioning about affection rightly says "This warm comfortableness, this satisfaction in being together, takes in all sorts of objects. It is indeed the least discriminating of loves" (22).

M) Please uncover your breast mother dear,
Please uncover and let me happily suckle,
Having wandered everywhere feeling thirsty, I came.

I am coming just now - running hurriedly
Having gone to look after the cows - O mother Devakī (23)

In the Kālī water, I stamped on the seven hoods,
Of the Kālīṅga-serpent, and I have become very tired.

When the damsels were naked, having removed their clothes,
I climbed the tree with difficulty after snatching
those away!

After drinking from the poisonous breasts
(of Pūtana) I have become really frightened.
So let me feed upon your breast - For I am very very hungry.

21) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds.; Kṛṣṇalīlā, song 53.

22) C.S. Lewis, The Four Loves, p.43.

23) by Devakī he apparently means Yaśodā. This ^{may} show Purandaradāsa's forgetfulness in his devotional ecstasy.

Please hurry and take this boy who is the best of all,
The Lord Purandaravithala on to your lap and give him milk. (24)

Kṛṣṇa is very much of a child and he demands his mother's milk. He states cleverly the reason for his thirst and hunger and for his coming so hurriedly without being called for. He knows how to get his mother's attention. Though he was old enough to take the cows for grazing, to swim in the river, to play with the gopis, he is yet a small child who would drink his mother's milk (25).

tām stanyakāma āsādyā mathnantīm jananiṁ hariḥ /
grhītvā dadhimanthānaṁ nyaṣedhat prītimāvahan // (26)

"And as she was churning, Hari came to his mother, eager to feed at the breast, and catching hold of the churning-rod, he stopped her, filling her with delight".

We can see a continuation of the Dāsa's imagination, the beginning of which one might trace to the above verse from the Bhāgavata. They are the results of the deep devotion and overwhelming joys of the dāsas, completely involving themselves in the pranks of Kṛṣṇa.

When a lively child's glorious boyhood and enchanting babyhood are considered as aspects for the adoration of the Lord, a picture emerges of naive and simple everyday act in life. There is nothing out of the ordinary - not a baby, but a child wanting to feed at his mother's breast.

N) "If you visit our village - O bogey-man
Please come do come to our lanes,
When you come to our lanes, O bogey-man,
Don't forget to visit the cowherd lane.

24) Purandaradāsarakīrtanē, Part 1, song 80.

25) Even until the last few decades it was a practice amongst Indian mothers to suckle their young until they were even six years old.

26) B.H.P. X-9-4.

A garland of forest flowers round your neck,
You lifted the mountain by your little finger;
You killed the demon Hiraṇyākṣa when it was
Neither day nor night - O bogey-man.

O bogey-man you play beautifully
On the flute, holding it in your lovely hands,
Don't go without being served by us and
I shall give you a gold-ring: please do wait.

O the black hued bogey-man
O cupid's father bogey-man
If you accept my call and if you come to my house
I shall offer my arm and blouse to you.

I give you a shawl to cover you, bogey-man
And I shall give you sweets to eat
I am fallen at your feet, bogey-man
And I offer you a garland of forest flowers.

Don't be angry; be patient, bogey-man
Until I prepare bread for you, or
Have this sweet at least bogey-man
O Purandaraviṭhala, the bogey-man.

(27)

This composition is particularly very attractive, for, in this song, Kṛṣṇa appears in the form of a rustic little mendicant. dāsayya (28) is a special word in Karnataka for rustic mendicants who visit houses in the villages and cities singing songs begging for alms. They hold the form of their chosen deity (made of metal or a picture); a turban on their head, a conch shell hanging from one shoulder and a begging bowl from another. Also they dress in a way which makes them look different from others. Their forehead will have a particular mark to show their adherence to a particular

27) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds.; Kṛṣṇalīlā, song 54.

28) This is derived from the word 'dāsa' - a servant of God. Begging is one of the self-imposed principles of these dasas, and this makes people feel humble. Until recent days even rich people used to go and beg from a few houses on certain days of the week during certain months of the year. However rich a person is, he is a servant to God. The dāsas adopted such a practice in order to emphasise this point.

group. The author used to see these dāsaiyyas almost every day in his village. Even now specially on Saturdays these dāsaiyyas could be seen in the country side (Due to more and more urbanisation this scene of the dāsaiyyas is degenerating gradually).

Children are specially attracted by these dāsaiyyas, and dāsaiyyas also love them. Children follow wherever a dāsaiyya goes until he leaves the village. They do all sorts of mischievous acts with these dāsaiyyas, for the dāsaiyyas would never get angry with them. Today, though these dāsaiyyas are discouraged from begging, it seems there was a time when they were duly respected and were welcome in villages. Purandaradāsa, being a dāsa himself has exploited the pleasures of being a dāsaiyya by making Kṛṣṇa a little dāsaiyya himself. Kṛṣṇa is dressed like one, and the gopis holding his tiny hands are singing. This scene is really enchanting. Such explanations help one to look at Kṛṣṇa ^{from} different angles. To the mind that is somewhat tired by listening to the same old incidents of Kṛṣṇa's life this is a new perception. This new awareness is there in every house and every heart. But it springs up only when someone points it out. Until now Kṛṣṇa had not appeared as a dāsaiyya. Now Purandara shows him as one. The impact is more because the dāsaiyya is not the usual elderly dāsaiyya (As soon as a Kannadiga hear the word dāsaiyya - not the figure of a child, or boy, or a youth come to their mind but an elderly man) but a little dāsaiyya who is none other than Kṛṣṇa. As Kṛṣṇa is very young, the word dāsaiyya takes on a new dimension.

Rottī (hard bread), kālu jenu (milky sweet) ṭambiṭṭu (a kind of sweet) - all are very common dishes in Karnataka and specially liked by children. What the children and people like is also liked by little Kṛṣṇa for he is their Lord. So the devotees offer such eatables to this little dāsaiyya and persuade him to come to their streets, their houses and their hearts.

The name dāsaiya which has been applied to little Kṛṣṇa in the above mentioned song has a very close connection to the word 'guiser,' mostly used in Scotland. I would like to quote a few sentences from the book The Lore and Language of School Children. "In almost all parts of Scotland it is customary for some children to go guising. 'At Hogmanay', writes an 11 year old Perth girl, 'we dress up in funny clothes and put soot on our faces. We knock at someone's door and sing: ..

They take us in and we sing a song, or say a piece of poetry. Then they give us something'. People commonly give them a 'piece', 'sweeties', an apple, or pennies! ". In the footnote it says " a 'piece' usually means a piece of bread and butter but on this occasion something more fancy: black bun, shortbread, or oatcake" (29). Though a 'guiser' is not exactly a dāsaiya, it has certainly very interesting points as far as our little dāsaiya is concerned.

Summary :

To arouse the sentiments of Vātsalya, certain elements need to be fulfilled. The child should not be too big. It should be very active and should keenly observe, and know what is happening around it. It should be mischievous and naughty and clever. One could easily tell whether a baby has all these qualities by a mere glance at the child. Its charming eyes and the fast movement of its limbs will easily reveal this. As it grows, day by day, it starts grasping new ideas to catch others' attention towards itself and to observe and wonder about everything around. Children's crawling, their turning over, walking in faltering steps, the movement of their hands to pick up something and trying to speak a few words, - all these bring immense joy to the onlookers. It is true that to everyone their children are dear however they behave. But to be everyone's child the above-mentioned qualities are necessary.

Kṛṣṇa fulfilled all these and much more. There were gopas, gopis, Yaśodā, Nandagopa and other such cowherds to enjoy his pranks then, and today, Kṛṣṇa devotees all over the country are waiting to see him sing and dance in their front yard. They do indeed see him dance with them to their own tunes in the songs of these Haridāsa of Karnataka and similarly to the tunes of other devotional songs of various devotees.

In general, the sentiments people relish when they experience the joy of these naturally beautiful scenes of Kṛṣṇa's boyhood, surpass any feeling they may experience whilst reading poems, plays and other such literature. The reason is that Kṛṣṇa appears new every minute. Though the devotion underlying these songs on Kṛṣṇa is the main cause for their popularity, this devotion is different from other types. It makes one forget oneself in its concentration on love, affection and friendship. If god appears as god, he becomes only worthy of respect and devotion. For intimate love and affection this has very little room. That is why everyone falls in love with Bālakṛṣṇa. While giving the life of Kṛṣṇa in its different colours Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa have presented the Kannada people with an unparalleled ^{He} child-literature, both for youngsters and elders. These songs along with certain folk songs of the contemporary period represent the first children's literature in Kannada.

Kṛṣṇa had cleverly woven his mental illusion over Yaśodā. At times He would clear that māyā and again he would bind her with it (30). This alteration of spreading and withdrawing illusion has served a great purpose. Because of this māyā, Yaśodā enjoyed the greatest joy a woman could experience. Because of this, Kṛṣṇa could play with her and others like a child and a boy. These incidents become more effective when Kṛṣṇa removes his 'māyā' for short periods

when suddenly one could feel the embarrassment of Yaśodā, Kṛṣṇa enjoys such situations. Because of this only the cowherds around could derive such a pleasure out of him and due to this alone the readers (audience) enjoy and forget themselves and identify themselves with one or the other character in these episodes. Here it is worth to ascribe a part of the credit of this māyā (31) that spreads over and binds the audience, to Purandaradāsa, for, in his songs the divine incidents have come closer to life of an average person, not served by the Bhāgavata - a Sanskrit text. The listeners'/readers' enjoyment appears to be more for they know that Yaśodā though is young-Kṛṣṇa's mother is still not so, as Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord; They watch the drama that appears truer than life itself.

KṚṢṆA AS A LITTLE BOY.

As a child, Kṛṣṇa was a thorough little pest to his mother. Now crying, now stealing, now running, now teasing the gopis, now performing miracles is how Kṛṣṇa would spend his time. Even though these acts of Kṛṣṇa at times strained Yaśodā's patience, she was happy to see her son like that. She would feel proud of him for everybody liked him. She would wonder at his doing certain things which others could not even imagine. At the same time she was worried about him, for he was very naughty and would cause trouble to one and all in that village. Nobody could control him for he was cunning. Yaśodā had also tried several methods to check him from doing such things, but he would escape successfully. Even though Yaśodā was feeling happy in her heart at Kṛṣṇa's behaviour she heard bad reports from others. This she did not like. As soon as

31) Firstly the audience is aware that Yaśodā herself is under the influence of māyā. Then they themselves capitulate to the minstrel's words.

the day broke she had to be prepared for hundreds of complaints about her son. He would go to other houses and do all sorts of mischief such as stealing the eatables, troubling the children, untying the calves and playing with young girls. The gopis would come to Yaśodā in groups and would tell of his deeds and scold the mother who gave birth to him.

A) There was only one alternative. Kṛṣṇa would remain at home only if it was dark. It seems Yaśodā had wished for the night to remain unchanged so that she could escape from such scandals.

What shall I do my son? oh' why has the daylight come?
The Gopis will come and humiliate me.

They say you stole milk, curds and butter,
And ate the cream placed above,
Also that you hit the children and they say:
What a bad woman she is who gave birth to you!

They say you untied the calves and let them free
And stamped and danced on the serpent,
They say you loved young girls, and
What a wicked woman she must be who gave birth to you!

They call you their sweetheart, - oh father of Gaṅgā,
O handsome one they simply scold you; yet
'O Purandaraviṭhala of auspicious glory
Protect us without fail' they say! (32)

Thinking of those objections that the gopis would bring Yaśodā is worried. As the day breaks she has to go to attend to her duties. But Kṛṣṇa will also get up and attend to his duties! It is this thought which has made her worry. Probably she is patting Kṛṣṇa's head and repeating the above said words full of motherly love. Nowhere she admits that her son committed mistakes. After all she is his mother. Her words are always; 'My son they say this, they say that'. The last stanza has a special meaning

32) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds., Kṛṣṇalīlā, song 77.

where Yaśodā addresses Kṛṣṇa as gaṅgājanaka . Gaṅgā removes sins and Kṛṣṇa being her father (33), how can he be blamed of sin? She says 'No my son, their scoldings are baseless'. Yaśodā as Kṛṣṇa's mother is not prepared to accept that her son could be blameworthy. All she can see is that other women take her to task, baridē dūruvaru .

This is how mothers will always be. There are several such songs and a study of them will reveal the different aspects of a mother's love towards her son or children. In such songs the sentiment of Vātsalya is very apparent.

B) This is a song with a different idea. Naughty Kṛṣṇa, though he is awake, is not getting up from his bed in the morning. His poor mother devises so many stratagems to awaken him. What she says to her son is this song:

The crow is cawing, the birds are singing
And the cuckoo is calling
Dear Kṛṣṇa - the nāgasampigē - flower is blooming.

Get up, wash your face and put the musk-spot on
your forehead.

I will give you a lump of butter
The darkness is torn, the day has broken;
Awake Kṛṣṇa my dear.

The Dosai (34) that I prepare hot, the thick curds
which I take out

And this fresh ghee made from cow's milk;
This tasty Kalasanna (35) and this dish of split-
green gram
My child I will keep for you to eat.

Why this unusual stubbornness today of all days?

Did you become the most obstinate among all boys?

33) Gaṅgā is born from the feet of Lord Viṣṇu.

34) Pancake

35) Mixed tasty rice.

If you cry today there is nobody to carry you

My dear child - Purandaraviṭhala, cry not I beg you. (36)

The love of a mother towards her child pervades every line. Mother Yaśodā does not care who he is. For her, he is her little son. It seems there is no better way of awakening a child in the morning than this. A mother's persuasion to awaken her little one is one of the most natural elements of family life. The thought that even Yaśodā was using the same tricks to make Kṛṣṇa awake is something that directly enters every heart, and probably a superb way of awakening people to embrace Lord Kṛṣṇa with love. The tempting food that Yaśodā offers Kṛṣṇa such as Dosai, Kalasanna, Belē Suggi, bring him closer to the Kannada people as these are some of the famous foods of Karnataka. That Yaśodā begged Kṛṣṇa not to cry, shows that Kṛṣṇa as a boy, was terribly mischievous obstinate, and uncontrollable.

Kṛṣṇa who is asleep needs to be patted gently on his back in order to wake him up, but is he indeed asleep? What a drama! Everyone knows that this is a drama, yet no one is sure about it!

In a different song eḷi mōsara kaḍēyireḷi (37) a gopi is calling out to her friends to rally round and get started the chores in hand. As soon as Kṛṣṇa is awake and gets up he needs this and that and he needs butter. There is so much to be done. When he wakes up does he allow them to do any work? This idea is not only an implication of little Kṛṣṇa's mischievous nature but also cannotates his ever wakefulness under a state of pretended sleep; a naive expression with a lovely hidden meaning. If He sleeps what would happen to the world? This is revealed to all who listen to this song with care.

36) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds., Kṛṣṇalīlē, song 29

37) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds., Kṛṣṇalīlē, song 28.

C) Yaśodā is addressing her darling Kṛṣṇa asking him to move aside and let her go to the cows to milk them. It was morning, naughty Kṛṣṇa was woken up and now is obstructing Yaśodā by holding on to her sari. She consoles him saying that she would give him this and that. Perhaps he did not listen to her. Yaśodā is cleverly persuading him, telling him of her difficulties.

Let go of my sari - Kṛṣṇa!
I have to go to milk the cows,
For the calves are hungry, O king of the
compassionate (let go of my sari).

I give you butter, churning creamy curds,
To eat I will give you bananas,
Peanuts and copra to chew, I give you,
I will send you to play with children.

Cowherds have come and stood at the door,
And are off to untie the calves,
Please do not trouble other's children,
O Bhāvaja's (38) father listen to my words.

O Lord of Gods our Purandaraviṭhala,
Do not untie the calves that belong to our neighbours,
Do not take away the clothes,
Of the women who are at the river. (39)

Yaśodā might have thought that she could easily finish her job of milking the cows thinking Kṛṣṇa was not there. Unfortunately he was very much there tugging at her sari and stopping her from her work. Kṛṣṇa knew he could blackmail his mother. If he impeded her in her busy duties, she would promise anything ^{to} this pest if only to get rid of him and have him out of the way, so she could get on with her multiple chores. She also knew that he would play mischief once out of her sight. Hence she had to say 'don't do this, don't do that'. So she bribes, persuades, and then advises and warns!. He was a thorough pest, yet very much loved too!

38) Manmatha, his father is Kṛṣṇa.

39) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds., Kṛṣṇalīlā, song 33.

D) Where shall I hide the butter,
For the havoc of the thieving Kṛṣṇa has become worse!

If I keep it high in pots to save it,
He can grow so great as to fill the universe!
Secretly if I keep it in a dark room, O sister,
His eyes are the very source of light!

If I place it where he cannot see it,
The Devas are his creation, (who do not blink their eyes)
If I go and seek their help, O friend
Indra and the rest are all his men.

So much he does - a mere boy! in the future
He could well upset our families smooth running
If we yell about his pranks there is a danger of
his increasing them,
What other dimensions will Purandaraviṭhal's
mischievous then take? (40)

The gopi while expressing her exasperation at Kṛṣṇa's mischief actually sings his glory and brings in his divine power.

The line - 'he can grow so great as to fill the universe' suggests his Vāmana incarnation. The second verse tells of Viṣṇu's superiority amongst the beings in heaven.

The essence of a few verses from the Bhāgavatapurāṇa may be quoted here as the theme of these verses seem to have influenced Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa to a great extent. "At times he would release the calves to their mothers at odd hours and if the house keeper became angry, he, deriving pleasure out of this, would using his thievish tricks steal sweet curds and milk and eat them. He offered them to the monkeys and if they refused them he would break the pots. If he did not get whatever he wanted, angrily he would cause children to cry and would run away. When the gopis were engaged in their household duties, if he was unable to reach things kept high with his bare hands, he would find a way to reach them by

placing wooden planks, the mortar etc., one on top of the other. Knowing what was kept in the suspended pots, he would make holes in them. In the dark room, he could see all around him through the light shed by the jewels and pearls that bedecked him. Behaving in this way, he even forgot himself in the houses. Having caused all these troubles here he is (near you) looking the very picture of innocence." (41)

E) Kṛṣṇa would go to the house of others and would steal butter or milk. He knew the secret places where the mothers would keep the food and would eat it as well when nobody observed him. The Gopis knew who it was. One day they were speaking among themselves about Kṛṣṇa's thieving ways:

Who should have come except He!

Who else than Śauri , the father of Cupid?

Though stepped with such care so he can be
hardly noticed,
There are the melodious tinkles of the bells,
There are the tell tale signs in the diamond and
rubies of a shorn necklace scattered on the ground;
And so, I do not see the butter floating on the
butter milk,

Spreading the fragrance of musk, in golden raiment,
Playing the horn, the flute and the trumpet there, He is.
But here, the pot of filtered curds has broken
Making the ground muddy.

Appearing like lightning - he scattered,
The utensils that were around,
Who else could the culprit be but Purandaraviṭhala,
Who unfailingly accords protection to his devotees! (42)

Kṛṣṇa tried not to make others know of his coming by his careful steps. But the jingling sound of his anklets gives him away.

41) B.H.P. X-8-29, 30 and 31a.

42) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Bṛṭāgeri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds., Kṛṣṇalīlā, song 56.

Further, in a hurry while stealing butter, he broke his necklace and the gems are scattered on the ground; a proof he was there!

It seems that if Kṛṣṇa was playing his flute happily somewhere, the gopis were able to guess that he must have done some mischief. Here he was happily playing his flute. The gopis suspected something and when they entered their houses they saw their curdpots broken and nothing left. So their decision was: The culprit is none other than Purandaraviṭhala. The dāsa has added the line that this culprit who steals the material (belongings) of people is the same Being who ultimately steals the very people. ... their hearts and their person.

F) Now, the gopis have decided to catch Kṛṣṇa. They saw Kṛṣṇa entering a house and followed him. What they witnessed there has been beautifully described in this song:

Come soon! Speak not! Whisper not!
Ranga has entered the house.

Footprints are visible in the house,
His anklet-bells are tinkling!
O sister, the Lord of Gods has played carelessly,
Spilling the butter milk as if it were coloured
water at Holi!

Making some sit below the roof;
And making some friends stand;
He jumps in and out of each compound;
Looting everything; come noiselessly!

Spilt milk flows like a flooded stream,
The cream of curds has been smeared everywhere
He may be full of tricks but do not let him go now,
That young thief Purandaraviṭhala! (43)

The idea of this, and a few songs that have appeared before
are ^{the} same but the way Purandaradāsa presents them differs.

43) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds., Kṛṣṇalīlā, song 58.

Purandaradāsa has added colour to the idea of the Bhāgavatapurāṇa (44) with his own imagination. He is not satisfied only by saying that Kṛṣṇa would take a mortar or a stool to reach the pot. He is overwhelmed with devotion and says that he is capable of growing up to the sky. Similarly with the other expressions in the original verse where it is said that Kṛṣṇa was capable of finding out things kept in darkness by the light created by his shining ornaments, Purandaradāsa goes further and his devotional sentiments make him sing that Kṛṣṇa's eyes are themselves the source of light. (or may be this a suggestion that the sun and the moon are his eyes!) Kṛṣṇa's physical prowess was an acknowledged one. But the poet goes further in drawing attention to the divine dimension of the same verbal expressions used to describe his superiority as a mischievous, handsome boy. A devotee presumes a licence to change or enhance an expression which appeals to him. The physical limits set in Bhāgavata are transcended to the divine limitlessness in the hands of the poet - devotee Purandaradāsa.

G) Is Kṛṣṇa a charming boy?

Is he still charming?

The father of cupid - Cannigarāya of Belur (is he charming still?)

Is he a rogue to beat the group of children assembled?

O mother

Can he be so violent as to have drunk milk and butter,
and then thrown it to the cats?

What is the use of adding, O mother, that he opens my
breast covering,

Why keep it a secret? he enters every house around here.

Here on earth to Nandagokula he came,

Lord Purandaraviṭhala taking a child's form. (45)

44) B.H.P. X-8-29, 30 and 31.

45) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds., Kṛṣṇalīlē, song 71.

The way of construction and selection of words is such that, though a repetition it does not seem to be so, it looks new. This skill of a poet is called pratibhā.

A verse of the Bhāgavata which has been quoted earlier (46) once again may be examined here to see how the ideas of that great work have found expressions in the local language. The only mentionable difference is that in the Bhāgavata it is said that Kṛṣṇa shared his loot with monkeys but in Kannada in Purandara's songs he shares it with cats. It is worth noting that, in the iconic paintings of Tañcāvūr, a cat is usually depicted at the foot of icons which depict Bālakṛṣṇa or Navanītacora. These may be due to the fact that cats rather than monkeys are kept as pets. Purandaradāsa makes use of the relevant and more acceptable fact.

H) The present song is in the form of a complaint by a gopi or gopis. The strange thing about Kṛṣṇa's knavery is that it does not make anybody angry with him or discard him but increase their love for him. Even the gopis who vociferously complain against him, are in fact experiencing pleasure in being the butt of Kṛṣṇa's pranks. It is they who complain when his pranks go beyond their control, and the very same gopis come and request Yasoda to show him. Yasoda probably was at home when the other gopis came and spoke:

Your son's plundering is really the limit - O Gopamma,
Please call him and advise him to behave properly.

Butter given to the children disappears from their hands,
The young calves do not get even milk left for them,
The curd-pots look as if entered by a ghost,
And all the Gopis are bewailing.

He sucks milk from Gopis who are fast asleep,
No milk will be left for their babies,
Taking such loot outside and this booty inside,
We know not how to escape!

He does not tolerate our going (from here) nor
does he allow us to stay,
He says that he is the Lord of the Universe,
You have unleashed the lotus-navelled,
Purandaraviṭhala as a street bull. (47)

If any other child than Kṛṣṇa had done such things, there would have been no excuse. On the other hand the whole town would have taken up its cudgels. The underlying sentiment that Kṛṣṇa is god results in people forgiving him.

In the last stanza the theme that the Lord of the universe is everywhere, all pervading and therefore inescapable, has been emphasised. But the expression used merely states that the gopis complain that they cannot escape from Kṛṣṇa whether they stay where they are or leave His presence. No one can rid himself of Kṛṣṇa's presence. He is always there. There was no way out for the gopis but to tolerate his misbehaviour. So they came to Yaśodā and told her that she herself is the reason for letting him roam like a street bull. Thus every line, every stanza brings a smile.

I) Kṛṣṇa is appealing to his mother concerning the teasing inflicted on him by his friends. Purandaradāsa was second to none in explaining the amusements of Kṛṣṇa, particularly when Kṛṣṇa was a little boy. Always choosing a different episode, he has presented these as befits an eminent poet, ever in a new way. Sometimes this would be by using as the poetic image - the complaints of the gopis, the words of Kṛṣṇa's friends, the sayings of his mother, the words of Kṛṣṇa himself. In the following song, Kṛṣṇa is speaking to his mother in an innocent tone:

Whenever and wherever I go to play
Children tease me, mother,

Turning their face and looking at me,
Their eyes twinkle mother!

Devakī, they say gave birth to me,
And Vasudeva is my father,
Born captive, under guard,
I escaped to here fearing my uncle (they say).

It was not you who gave me birth - Mother,
They say I am not your son,
As there were none to look after the cows,
You brought me up with love.

I killed, they say, the demoness who
Took me to her poisoned breast;
They say, I killed the demon Śakaṭa,
When I was just a child.

I slew the demon Vatsa, they say,
And swallowed the forest-fire,
And ran and danced on Kāṇḍīya's hoods,
Who came to bite me then.

They tease me saying - I ran off with clothes
Of the bewitching damsels;
This boy is not a child, they say,
He is the son of a demon.

I ran, they say, by dragging the mortar,
Pulling down the forest trees,
I climbed the trees after stealing the clothes,
Of Gopis while they bathed (they say).

This is the one - who is handsome,
Purandaraviṭhala! He it is,
Who tricked the women and deceived them, and
They say I ran away! (48)

Kṛṣṇa tells his mother Yaśodā what he was accused of by
his friends. Now it is Kṛṣṇa's turn to complain against his friends.

He uses this trick to reveal his reality through his mother to all

48) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds., Kṛṣṇalīlā, song 44



Kāliya - Mardana - Kṛṣṇa,
Kṛṣṇa dancing on the Kāliya serpent,
Viṭhala temple, Hampi.



Kāliya-Mardana-
Kṛṣṇa.
Kṛṣṇa temple,
Hampi.

(Courtesy:
 Dr.J.R. Marr)

those^{who} singing or read this song. He was a rather unusual boy with some feats to his credit. A similar instance, not too different could be seen in the Bhāgavata where the cow-herds came to Nandagopa and expressed their feelings and doubts about Kṛṣṇa (49). Kṛṣṇa's deeds were not reported to his father with wonder and surprise but with suspicion. Purandaradāsa uses this theme with Kṛṣṇa himself narrating this to his mother. So the sentiment which Bhāgavata depicts has skilfully changed to the ^sassertion of achievements in a boy's complaints about his friends to his mother. It is always the role of a mother to console her child. So, Kṛṣṇa has come running to his mother Yaśodā and appeals to her.

It is clear how Purandaradāsa has very carefully composed most of the songs in not allowing the listener or singer or the reader even to feel in the least a respect towards Kṛṣṇa. Instead the poet creates moods of admiration, and of unfathomable love, then leads them to the uniqueness of the readers' relationship with the immanence of Kṛṣṇa. This is a significant aspect of Purandaradāsa's compositions.

The incidents given in the song have not occurred in the same sequence in Kṛṣṇa's life. Kṛṣṇa is telling these incidents when he is disturbed because of his non-acceptance in his friends' circle. This adds to the beauty of the song. In his eagerness a child seldom thinks to tell events in a logical or chronological sequence, but at random as he thinks of them. This brings a smile on every face.

J) Kṛṣṇa was often a very naughty boy, and would give a lot of trouble to his mother. Nobody could control him for he would disappear at every opportunity by some stratagem or other. Nothing

49) B.H.P. X-26-1, 4, 5, 7, 9, 12 and 14.

in Gokula was safe from the mischievous hands of Kṛṣṇa, not for a minute would he stay in one place. He would dance about, doing this and that; sometimes playing with his friends, sometimes quarelling with them. Now he would ridicule the elders, now, he would tease young girls. He would go to the shed and untie the cows and their calves at odd hours. In his presence the calves were quite free to feed at their mothers, which would not be the case since there would be no milk for the cowherd if the calves were to drink it all. Sometimes he himself would suck the milk from the udder when no one was looking. At home also if Yaśodā had prepared something to eat he would intently cry for something else that was not prepared. Yaśodā was very upset by these mischievous deeds of her son. In order to control him she thought of a plan to create a kind of fear in his mind. She told Kṛṣṇa that she would call a bogeyman to take him away. The result was that Kṛṣṇa surrendered to his mother begging her not call the bogeyman to take him away (a pretence!)

The following song deals succinctly with the above explained theme. This is one of the best known songs of the great Dāsa:

Call not the bogeyman O mother,
Call not the bogeyman

I shall keep quiet, I shall not trouble you for milk,
I shall eat my food and shall not cry!

I shall not go where young women go,
And shall not close their eyes,
I shall not beat children smaller than I, I shall
not scold my elder brother;
I shall not ask for butter and I shall not eat mud!

I shall not go to the well Mother,
I shall not play with the serpent there,
I shall not untie the young calves so that they
may drink their mother's milk,
But I shall sit like a God in one of the corners
(of the house)

Listening to these words of her son, the Queen
of the Gopis (Yaśodā),
A smile on her face
Overwhelmed with joy, hugged her dear son,
The Lord Sri Purandaraviṭhala. (50)

This poem presents the theme of Kṛṣṇa's juvenile mischief and repentance in a striking manner. It is to the devotees that one must turn for such a detailed and loving description of his escapades, for the original works do not contain such ideas. Herein, Purandaradāsa has made Kṛṣṇa more lively by his power of imagination.

Children will always be naughty and mothers like them all the more for it, but nothing should exceed its limit or mothers get angry with them. She told him if he misbehaved a bogeyman will snatch him away. The result was Kṛṣṇa's surrender to his mother. He promised her that he would stop being a nuisance and begged her not to call the demon. He admitted his guilt and promised not to misbehave again if she would refrain from calling the bogeyman. The last line of the second verse carries a beautiful simile 'gentle reminder of his Godhead' (51), addressed to the mother in particular and, by implication, to the reader. Like any intelligent and wily child, Kṛṣṇa knew how to sway the mind of his mother.

Here the fast reaction of Kṛṣṇa is so appealing that it is impossible not to admire his childish remonstrations. He lists his pranks which he promises he will not commit again! Yaśodā is listening to the coaxing and supplicatory words of her little

50) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds., Kṛṣṇalīlē, song 39

51) In Indian homes it is very common to have a sanctorum or pūja-room, where the chosen deity along with any other affiliated deities will be usually installed. Obviously the material representation recognised as God will stay put in that corner quietly and quite unobtrusively. Kṛṣṇa by promising that he will be like God is actually referring to this type of quiet corner. "It is criticism indeed of God and worship", thus comments V.Sitaramaiah in his book Purandaradasa, p.55.

son and the readers can well see the smile on her face. This is enough to bring the intended effect i.e., arousing the innermost motherly emotions of love. Yaśodā could not control her joy and could not help but embrace Kṛṣṇa.

Even had not the minstrel sung the last verse, its meaning would have been understood. But there are places where the human mind does not want to be bothered by the implied meaning. It wants even the implied idea to be expressed, for in its emotional ecstasy the mind would lose its power of imagining things. It wants to see what happened. Purandaradāsa's expertise suddenly realises this point and the result is the final stanza wherein he says Yaśodā hugged her son. This has added to the beauty of the song's imagery.

K) Kṛṣṇa had had enough of threats from his mother. He, one day, brings an end to that by his clever narration of his heroic deeds, innocently as any clever boy would do :

Where is the bogey-man - show me mother,
Do not threaten me for nothing.

The earth which is so vast and wide, upon which
I wandered without hesitation,
I distributed it to whomever it belonged,
I found no bogeman even there.

Having the whole universe in my stomach,
I showed the whole of it in my mouth (to you),
I killed the ugly wind-demon who came,
But did not find the bogeyman even there.

Jumping into the deep waters of Kālī,
Trampling Kālinga's hoods, I danced on them,
I granted Kālinga's life to his wives,
I did not find the ogre even there.

I showed my universal form to Akrūra,
And went hurriedly to Mathurā on a chariot,
I killed the arrogant washerman,
And wore his cleaned clothes, Though searched, I
found no ogre there!

Attending the bow-festival I killed the wrestlers,
And saved my grand father by killing my uncle,
Come on Mother, do not show fear in every word
you speak,
To this charming Gopāla, the Purandaraviṭhala. (52)

In the previous song (gummanakarēyadirē - 'do not call the bogeyman') Kṛṣṇa himself admits that he was afraid of these ogres and begs his mother not to call them to take him away. Mother Yaśodā thought her darling Kṛṣṇa was very frightened and thus she embraced him telling him that she would not do so if he behaved well. Poor Kṛṣṇa bound himself by his own words. Now he had to withdraw himself into his shell from all his knavery for his mother would use the above plan to frighten him. Perhaps Kṛṣṇa did not think that his mother would misuse his pretence. Now he had to make it clear to her that he could no longer be frightened by the same old trick again and again. So in this song he is giving an example of his prowess by narrating some important events of his life. Kṛṣṇa, as he grew older although he could easily have become an emperor, he did not aspire for such a position, all the time fighting for the cause of good. He subjugated many wicked rulers wandering the length and breadth of the country and gave their kingdoms to the right and loyal ones. This idea has been suggested through little Kṛṣṇa's words in the first stanza of the song (53). Little Kṛṣṇa showing the whole universe in his mouth, the death of the demon Tṛṇāvarta in his hands, Kālīya learning a lesson from Kṛṣṇa; Akrūra's vision of Kṛṣṇa's universal form; Kṛṣṇa killing the arrogant washerman, the experienced wrestlers and Kāṁsa having reached Mathurā, have all been described in the words of the child who committed the deeds. Can such a Kṛṣṇa be frightened by being told him that an ogre would take him away?

52) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds., Kṛṣṇalīlē, song 41.

53) cf. H.V. I-68-31.

How children become restless when elders stand in their way has been depicted very neatly in the song. As one goes on studying Kṛṣṇa's lilas, divine amusements, one finds he is the representation of all that is human as well as divine. In every phase of one's life one can see His image in one's own self.

KṚṢṆA AND MUSIC:

Kṛṣṇa's name is invariably connected with music. He is called Veṅugopāla, the flutist - cowherd, Muralīlola, the one who likes flute and also by many other such names. To many people in India, as soon as the name Kṛṣṇa is uttered the picture that comes to their mind is that of little Kṛṣṇa holding the flute and enchantingly standing cross-legged with his body bent in three places. This is a famous posture called tribhaṅgi found in all Indian dance forms. These emphasise that Kṛṣṇa, music and dance are inseparable. Music reminds one of divinity and such being the case if the Lord Himself plays the music what should happen? This has been very effectively brought by Purandaradāsa in some of his songs.

The gopis were mad after him for many reasons, two of which were his music and dance. The cowherds were also dumbfounded by the same. Cows would stop eating, even giving milk to their calves when Kṛṣṇa started to play his divine music. This is not all, even inanimate objects responded to his flute.

- A) All the gopis gather together and get Ranga to dance, clapping and singing his auspicious name.

Singing in the ragas Malahari, Bhairavi, Sāranga, Deśi, Gundakri, Gujjari and Kalyāṇi
In groups they hold the waist-bells of Ranga,
Sound it rhythmically and make him dance.

By the sounds of the trumpet and Nagasvara, hand
beats and drums and stick,
And also of the pure conch-shell,
And holding the Supreme Lord, forming a circle around him,
With love they make him dance.

All the gopis having gathered together played
with the child,
They hugged and kissed him out of love,
He who fulfils the desires and who is the protector
of the devotees,
The Lord Purandaraviṭhala. (54)

This song, unlike other songs carries some technical information regarding music. The first stanza mentions the names of seven well-known ragas of Karnatak music; then follow the rhythmic formulae such as tanḍa tanḍadi nēṛēdu ḍhaṇ ḍhaṇa ḍhaṇirēndu indicative of tāla, time-measure.

The next stanza says that the gopis were dancing with Kṛṣṇa to the sounds of trumpet and Nāgasvara, and drums and hand beats that are wind and percussion instruments. These points support the subject matter in that Purandaradāsa was aware of the need for a scale and rhythm to his songs.

The simplicity he adopted for his songs was deliberate because he did not want his message to be confined to the cream of scholarship. He wanted it to reach the least literate or learned forever.

B) Came playing on the flute, He, son of our Gopi,
He plays it charmingly indeed

He is the son of Vasudeva, you see,
He came from the womb of Devakī,
He killed his uncle Kāṁsa,
He is Mukunda, the father of Manmatha.

Wearing^{an} ornament of pearls,
And holding the flute in his hand,
Putting a mark of musk on his forehead,
He played the flute drawing out of it, melodious sounds.

Behind him he has the herd of cows,
In his front the cow-herd group,
This lovable Purandaravithala is he,
Who has killed demons before. (55)

This song is very likely to have been sung by a gopi admiring Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa was playing his flute beautifully. He was well-dressed. He had been followed by cows and cowherds. Looking at such a Kṛṣṇa her emotions overflowed with joy and thus she sang. This is however a case of dramatic irony, if one takes this to be sung by a gopi. Kṛṣṇa was still a little boy and he was yet to go to Mathurā to kill his uncle Kāṁsa. Purandaradāsa who knows the whole of Kṛṣṇa's life, identifies himself with a gopi. But she at the time she must have sung would not have known it all. Yet, she sings the incidents known later to her and to others in a spirit of prophecy, as it were. The first two lines give one an impression that the gopi would sing about the beauty of His flute playing and suddenly from flute the song goes somewhere else, thus bringing a stop to the idea of the kind of enjoyment the listeners were preparing themselves^{for}. It could be said that the song has suffered to a certain extent because of this. But another point should be noted here. The gopi who was to sing about Kṛṣṇa's music perhaps, suddenly forgets herself when she looked at him and a different kind of idea has started unchaining itself in her mind and she has moved on to describe his physical beauty.

C) When Ranga played on his flute,
The Earth was transformed into a place of bliss,
People forgetting their very self,
Were in the trance of Ranga.

The withered Mango trees bore leaves and fruits,
The blowing wind became a cool breeze,
The dry trees and creepers were full of fruit,
The bees would not hum!
The birds like Cakora, Parrot, Cuckoo and others
Felt ashamed and did not sing having lost their charm.
The birds and animals stopped their movement and fight,
And fell fast asleep!

Yamuna's level of water, all of a sudden arose,
And spilt allround by her swinging movements,
Black clouds clustered and poured down,
Even the rocks were melted away!
The lotus flower, the champaka flower and various
other flowers,
With increasing fragrance threw themselves
At the feet of the blue-bodied one.

Tightening their udder, having neglected their calves,
Without eating the tender grass,
The cows stood wherever they were,
With their straightened uplifted tails,
To see such Acyuta the Gods were thrilled,
Their joy increased looking at the cows;
Enjoying the divine amusements of Mukunda,
They showered flowers on him.

Listening to the melodious music of the enchanter,
The minds of the Gopis were robbed,
Leaving their homes they came and were hypnotised (by
the sound of His flute),
The sages engrossed in penance got up,
From their Samādhi and started to dance,
Pleasing the supreme Lord,
And thus they won the ocean of this worldliness.

Kṛṣṇa's form was enchanting in the Madhukunja Grove,
With his body in the three-bend posture (tribhaṅga),
With golden coloured dress, with a straight mark of
sandal paste a mark of musk on his forehead,
And in the light of his shining crown,
He had a waist band, a garland of forest flowers,



Veṇugopāla,
The cow-herd Flutist,
Kṛṣṇa temple, Hampi.

(Courtesy :
Dr. J.R. Marr)

With the marks of Śrīvatsa and Kaustubha,
Him, the Lord Purandaraviṭhala they saluted,
By singing the melodies such as Rāmakri, Gundakri,
Megharanjani, And also by saying 'O lover of Sāmaveda
singing' (they saluted Him). (56)

This comparatively lengthy song gives in minute detail the result of the sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute. There is very little poetical beauty as such, but still the composition is very appealing without any kind of embellishment. The expressions one finds here are all very natural, simple and straight forward. This is called svabhāvokti, 'presentation of experience just the way they are revealed'. This simplicity brings out the feelings hidden underneath the words spoken and generates great delight to the singers listeners and readers.

Kṛṣṇa's connection with music is once again emphasised at the end of the song where it is said that the gods sang the melodies Rāmakri, Gundakri, Megharanjani and also that they called him the lover of the Sāmaveda chanting. Of these Rāmakri, Gundakri and Megharanjani are all melodies of Karnatic Music and the Sāmaveda is the most musical of all the Vedas. The influence of the Veṇugīta (57) portion of the Bhagāvatā on this song could be easily recognised. What has been said there in many verses has been made available to the Kannada folk in one song.

KṚṢṆA AND THE GOPIS

The relationship between Kṛṣṇa and the gopis, the cowherd girls, and women, was a very special one. Certain songs about Kṛṣṇa by Purandaradāsa reveal how he harassed the gopis with his clever encounters. He took a fancy to them and would go and play

56) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds., Kṛṣṇalīlā, song 93.

57) B.H.P. X-21-7 to 16, also see pages 73, 74 and 76 of the present thesis.

with them; sometimes with their consent and at times using force. The gopis also give enough trouble to Kṛṣṇa. Though the gopis would complain to Yaśodā about Kṛṣṇa, their concealed smile would reveal that they indeed wanted Kṛṣṇa to continue with his mischief. Kṛṣṇa's reactions and activities show that he understood this. He would plunder the houses of the gopis, and once he entered a house, he would not leave without butter, milk or curds. He would even touch their breasts and tug at their clothes. All these acts of his, carefully studied, reveal the mind of an infant, a little boy and his eagerness for new exploration and for drawing attention to himself. Every time, Kṛṣṇa emerges in new colours, either as a thief, or a cunning boy, or an innocent, or a crying little one. These descriptions are very natural and very close to the hearts of the Kannada people, for, he comes to them as a Kannadiga in their own dress speaking their own language and playing just like their own children.

A) What shall I say about your son's pretexts?

Without any sense of shame he has come into our house.

He drank a full jug of milk, he broke a pot there,
And hid himself inside a big vessel.
If we try to beat him as we found him,
Is he the son of a poor man to be beaten?

He came to take our daughter in the disguise
of a son-in-law,
He quarrelled and asked us to send her with him,
Gopi, we kept him for two months out of affection,
And now He has spoilt our parrot-like (innocent) daughter!

Why so much anger towards my little Kṛṣṇa?
Create not false reasons for scolding him.
Turn your eyes and see right here in the cradle,
Purandaraviṭhala, who is the Lord of Creation (58)

Kṛṣṇa was a little boy. But the complaints against him by the gopis reveal that he had carried out some mischief in their houses. Yaśodā could not believe that her boy could do such things - but the gopis went on narrating his exploits. The only way she could silence them was to show that her darling was innocent and that he was too young to have attributed to him such scoldings, and so she shows them Kṛṣṇa who was sleeping in the cradle as if he knew nothing! Here this defence of Yaśodā appears to be too much, at the same time even the complaints against Kṛṣṇa by gopis also have gone too far. When someone does some mischief, the complaint of the one who suffers from such a mischief will almost always be exaggerated. Similarly, the defence to prove the innocence of the former will be overstated.

B) We cannot live in Gokula - Gopamma,
We cannot live in Gokula,
We are exasperated by his noisy clamour,
Please listen to what that Kṛṣṇa has done;
(we will tell you).

Stealing milk and curds, let him, listen, Gopamma,
Let him eat the butter kept high above,
Anywhere in the world, oh! let him play,
But this sleeper on the banyan leaf creeping
into our houses,
Teasing our girls, pulling their clothes,
Flirts outrageously with every one of them!

Let him visit us on his own at the right time,
Let him come with friends, yes, let him bring them
with him.

Let him stay with us as if our very kin,
Finding just that right time, he
Let the calves go to their mothers,
And rousing everybody at home,
He plunders the whole house.

He shouted at us - time and again - as if he
were our husband.

He made love with many a Gopī - O Gopamma - to us
do listen.

To whom can we wail about this?

All our orderly lives are thrown into confusion,

Oh! do call your Purandaraviṭhala

And make him see reason!

(59)

This is yet another song dealing with the exploits of Kṛṣṇa in Gokula. Nothing was safe at his hands. The poor gopis did not object to him stealing butter, curds or milk (of course he would hardly have cared even if they did object!) But they did not tolerate Kṛṣṇa's playing with young girls, pulling off their clothes and embracing them!

Kṛṣṇa would go to their houses but not alone; a number of his friends would follow him. To this also the gopis did not object. Instead they wished him to behave as their kin. But Kṛṣṇa would go there at odd hours, untying the calves to let them go to their mothers, and then he would shout aloud. While they were engaged in tying up the calves, he would plunder their homes.

He would trouble the gopis, and when they objected to his company he would insist that he was their husband. Added to all this, he was the son of their leader! The gopis, feeling helpless, came to Kṛṣṇa's mother, Yaśodā, and reported how their life had become upset.

While reading such songs the reader would appreciate Kṛṣṇa's playfulness, his mischievous behaviour. That is what is required from a young boy of Kṛṣṇa's age. If he had stood meditating, nobody would have recognised him. Here one may find some exaggeration in the words of the devotee but this should be considered as a factor of human weakness under certain circumstances. To give an example

59) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Bēṭagerī, Huccarāva Bengerī, eds., Kṛṣṇalīlē, song 68.

people utter such expressions as "my heart stopped beating!" "It made an ear-splitting noise". Here, these expressions do not mean exactly what is literally signified, but are mere hyperbole and people take them in this spirit. In such circumstances merely a factual expression is held inadequate. Kṛṣṇa was naughty enough to understand the weakness of the gopis. He could see that they were afraid of him and at the same time they liked him. It is human psychology that if somebody appears to fear somebody else, the latter would always try to upset the former; this is especially noticeable among children. So Kṛṣṇa harassed the gopis, time and again, deriving pleasure from their plight!

Purandaradāsa has remembered that Kṛṣṇa is God; the readers are aware of this too. But for the gopis he was the son of their mistress. The picture of little Kṛṣṇa and the worried gopis takes the reader to a world of inexplicable ecstasy. They love Kṛṣṇa. This sentiment is called Madhurabhāva. As this has arisen in connection with devotion to Kṛṣṇa it is called Madhurabhakti. It appears that no other Bhakti-form brings this type of delight, which resembles that of a lover and a beloved.

C) People who go to Lord Kṛṣṇa with their problems are all different. He is their only God who can be approached easily. In this song, an instance has been given by Purandaradasa of how a gopi prays to Kṛṣṇa.

The Time is now, Ranga, come!
The Time is now, Kṛṣṇa come!

My sister-in-law is an expert thread maker,
She never gets up, her work unfinished, never;
My mother-in-law is after the stories of the puranas
and the like,
And she returns only at dawn;

My father-in-law has no faith in me,
Even my husband always neglects me,
My brother-in-law never likes me at all,
So if you come at this right moment it will be better.

I shall not think of my father and mother,
I shall not long for my own child either,
O holder of the Mandara mountain!
Purandaraviṭhala, if you come I shall serve your feet. (60)

Going through the first three stanzas it appears as if the gopi can be held open to blame. It seems as if she is inviting Kṛṣṇa for a sinful frolic. However the last line by its simplicity and presentation, lifts the whole song to a level expressing holiness that strikes every heart.

Only when the first half of the final carāṇa is revealed does the real message of the song emerge.

A poor gopi is ill-treated and neglected by her own family members and she has suffered at their hands. A verse from the Gita may be observed here:

caturvidhā bhajante mām janā sukr̥tino'rjuna /
ārto jijñāsurarthā hī jñānī ca bharataṛṣabha // (61)

"Among the pious who seek me with devotion (love) there are four kinds: there are those who are in distress; those who seek knowledge, those who desire for wealth and those who seek wisdom." What Kṛṣṇa meant by the word ārtaḥ in the above verse, is the status of the gopi in the present song. The only way she could find happiness was to pray to the Lord, if possible in privacy. She had to watch everybody and then only she could invite Him. Having instructed Him as to the time when there is no disturbance she is prepared even to go to such an extent as to not to divert her attention towards her own child but to serve Lord Purandaraviṭhala's feet.

60) R.R. Divākara, ed., , Haribhaktisudhā, song 159.

61) B.G. VII-16.

Some of the verses of the Bhāgavata may be recollected where the gopis, as if by some magic, rushed towards Kṛṣṇa, where he was playing on his flute.

tā vāryamāṇā patibhiḥ pitṛbhirbhrātṛbandhubhiḥ /
govindāpahṛtātmāno na nyavartanta mohitāḥ //
antargṛhagatāḥ kāścīdgopyo'labdhavinirgamāḥ /
kṛṣṇaṁ tadbhāvanāyuktā dadhyurmīlitalocanāḥ // (62)

"Though they were prevented by their husband, parents, brothers and relatives they did not return having had their souls stolen by Govinda. Certain gopis who were unable to come out of their closed inner apartments meditated upon Kṛṣṇa with closed eyes, their mind absorbed in him".

We see a similarity of ideas in the above verse of the Bhāgavata and the song by Purandaradāsa. The last verse of the Bhāgavata quoted above seems to have lent itself to such an expression in Purandaradāsa's song.

D) Gopis love for Kṛṣṇa was beyond all expression and telling. They had never thought that a day would come when they had to live without their Kṛṣṇa. So they were naturally not prepared for such an occasion. The news that Akrūra had come to take their Lord, Svāmi, to Mathurā was unbearable and they even witnessed him being taken to Mathurā on a chariot. They could never imagine that their Kṛṣṇa would desert them all and go away from them. The whole world looked fruitless to them. They could not find any interest in life in Brndāvana.

Love between a mother and her child, between friends and lovers, like that of husband and wife, finally, love towards a Lord, all these have appeared time and again in the life of Kṛṣṇa and the gopis. This diversity is found only with reference to the gopis

whereas Mother Yaśodā always looked after him as her child. We smile when Kṛṣṇa steals butter and teases the young gopis; we like him for his innocent requests at times; we feel sorry for the gopis when he harasses them; we wonder when he kills the demons at his tender age; we look at him with awe when we hear the complaints raised by the gopis against him and we also join them in saluting him when they pray for Him.

Only some of the elders suspected and some knew him to be God. So to all others, he was little Kṛṣṇa the son of Yaśodā and Nandagopa. This naturalness prevailing in each of his childhood pranks, boyhood mischief is the main theme that is responsible for creating a homely atmosphere for everybody in his life. Therefore it is no wonder that the gopis knew nothing except Him. He would bless whoever uttered his name and then, the gopis who knew nothing but Him, were deservedly given the best of all blessings, i.e. His company, and He played, danced, and sang with them without letting them know his real entity. Purandara himself says : "He did not appear to those who meditate upon him counting the beads uttering the mantra 'aum' with closed eyes, shrunken body and matted hair.." (63). Kṛṣṇa, who was difficult to attain even by great sages gave himself to the lucky gopis. One more point is that these gopis were in no way inferior to the sages for they had come to Kṛṣṇa forgetting their husbands, children, parents and household duties. In brief it could be said that they had unchained themselves from all worldly attachments - no simple achievement. So they were worthy of Kṛṣṇa's blessings. Here the emphasis is on the irresistible natural human reaction rising to a deep philosophical union with the ultimate. A 'Union' in basic terms is the human union of mind and body as all know. The latter is thus exploited as a vehicle in order to take us where lies the real truth.

63) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds., Kṛṣṇalīlė; song 4, verse 8.

Thus when a person enjoys the company of the Lord how could anything else in the world make him happy? Just a temporary separation from close friends is unbearable for human beings, and such being the case, what might have been the plight of the gopis when Kṛṣṇa left for Mathūṛā?

They scolded everybody, each tree, each bird, each flower, would speak to them of their Kṛṣṇa. The whole forest was blooming with joy when Kṛṣṇa was there. But today they were all just like pictures.

Now they blame Akrūra, and now they praise Kṛṣṇa's deeds of help to others. They remember the time they spent playing games in the Yamunā's water and also his love-sports with them. But throughout there is a tinge of sorrow which reveals the unbearable news that Kṛṣṇa would never return to Bṛndāvana.

What is this Mathurāpura?

What is this bow-festival?

Who is this maternal uncle of all?

What is this combat with wrestlers?

And when did this wicked Kāṁsa

Become our enemy, O friend?

All the different kinds of trees in Bṛndāvana

Were laden with different fruits,

In the house of kunda flowers, the cakora birds,

Each of them were happy,

Because then, Madhava the darling of Nanada, joining us,

Took our hands in his, O my friend!

Akrura by preparing to leave with Acyuta

Why became he so krūra (cruel) to us?

Understanding our agitation, using a devious trick

Did he separate Cakradhara from us?

O my friend, is He the one who, entering heaven, brought

The Parijāta tree for Satyabhāmā?

Making us stand (in the river) while playing in the water
He would pour water on us gopis
Looking into their (our faces), time and again he
would drink
The nectar from their (our) lips
Does (that) Purandaraviṭhala of the City of Dvarakā
Join us again and lookafter us O my friend? (64)

The trees, the flowers, the birds which were once full of life when Kṛṣṇa was there, looked lifeless, for he left for Mathurā. 'Akrūra' (gentle) became krūra (cruel) to the gopis for he took away their beloved. The next two lines are about the story of Kṛṣṇa going to Indra's heaven and snatching the Pārijata tree from there for his beloved wife Satyabhāmā. The significance of these lines may be that Kṛṣṇa was so kind to Satyabhāmā and went to heaven just to bring her that tree, so, could he not listen to the gopis' prayer and fulfil their desires? But as Kṛṣṇa was yet to be married and as the gopis' and Kṛṣṇa's relationship was long before he married Satyabhāmā, this only appears to be anachronistic, but, in the Indian view god, after all, is Kālātīta, 'beyond time'.

Then the gopis recollect how they played in the water with Kṛṣṇa and how he drank ambrosia from their lips. All these sorrowful thoughts reach their peak when they ask themselves (their friends) "Will he come back, O my friend and bless us all again?".

Thus the depth of the gopis' devotion towards Kṛṣṇa is expressed clearly in those songs which they sing when Kṛṣṇa was no more in Brndāvana.

E) Kṛṣṇa went to Mathurā with Akrūra, and after killing Kāṁsa and other Asuras, had to stay there at the request of his father and mother. He did not forget the gopis and his life in Gokula. In order to send them a message not to be disgusted with him for

64) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds., Kṛṣṇalīlē, song 100

staying in Mathurā, he called one of his devotees, Uddhava, and requested him to take the message to Gokula. When Uddhava arrived there all the gopis attacked him with a hundred and one questions. They were all very angry with Kṛṣṇa. They loved seemingly to hate him; perhaps also they felt too vulnerable in deprivation of him, to show their true love. Their hostility was not only towards Kṛṣṇa but also towards Akrūra who took Kṛṣṇa to Mathurā, and also towards Uddhava who had come without their Lord. When at last Uddhava gave the message of consolation sent by Kṛṣṇa, with great difficulty they were placated. This song gives the pitiable and sorrowful condition of the gopis, and is the gist of the whole portion spoken by them to Uddhava which we find in the Bhāgavata (65).

Of what use is Vṛndāvana? Enough of the life of Gokula!
Why did you come here, Uddhava?

Do not speak of the friendship of the man of many glories
For he joined the hunchback woman!

Alas! We have been deprived of the company and smiling
conversation,
With him, the father of Cupid;
That Akrūra was really Krūra who separated Kṛṣṇa
from us all,
And he took our dear one away,
Having killed the wrestlers, he who slayed his uncle Kaṁsa,
Him, bring Him, the lotus-navelled one, and show him to
us, Uddhava.

His making love with us daily, by kissing us
And by sweet words
The joy we experienced with him who knew our hearts
And, who is the father of Cupid,
These have become as though seen in a dream,
Tell us how to sustain our lives until we see him again!

They call Him the ocean of compassion but he is a true
hypocrite

Who turned our happiness into sorrow,
One who was called the protector of those who remembered him,
Forgot all, and went to Mathura,
Take us to that Purandaraviṭhala, the darling of the
devotees,
O learned Uddhava! (66)

Such small songs expressing the grief of the gopis reveal to the listener how intense was the relationship of the gopis with Kṛṣṇa. He was most dear to them. He was so handsome, active and charming that anybody who came in contact with him would hate to be separated from him. Such being the case, what about the gopis who played and danced with Kṛṣṇa for years together? Kṛṣṇa's going to Mathurā was a great shock to them. They had never imagined that they would miss his company so much. Now they had to suffer another shock in that Uddhava came to tell them that Kṛṣṇa would remain in Mathurā. They were all waiting for Kṛṣṇa's arrival as he had given his word to them that he would return as soon as the festival was over. But they had to see Uddhava coming without him. All this resulted in the tearful outbursts of their sorrow. The fact that he is symbolic of the idea of God does not prevent them indulging in the liberties of complaint and accusation. This is an impressive aspect of the free relationship between Kṛṣṇa and the gopis, his devotees. This has been very well depicted in the songs of Purandaradāsa.

A few examples from the Bhāgavata where gopis speak to Uddhava add to the point.

katham rativiśeṣajñāḥ priyaśca varayoṣitām /
nānubudhyeta tadvakyairvibhramaiścānubhājitaḥ // (67)

"How can he, being a connoisseur of the art of love and the darling of the most splendid women escape falling under the spell of their

66) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds., Kṛṣṇalīlā, song 102.

67) B.H.P. X-47-41.

alluring words and ways? (68).

gāyantyaḥ priyakarmāṇi rudatyaśca gatahriyaḥ /
tasya saṁsmṛtya saṁsmṛtya yāni kaiśorabālyoyoh // (69)

"Singing the happy time spent with Kṛṣṇa in childhood and boyhood days and remembering them again and again, they started weeping without any shame". This verse is continued by some more verses in similar vein which deal with the emotion of the gopis. This portion of the Bhāgavata has found an echo in Purandaradāsa's song.

F) Give us mother, him who is like a moon to the ocean
in the form of the Yādava race.

We came here so looking forward to join and enjoy,
The father of Cupid, the beguiling one (i.e. Kṛṣṇa).

Bow festivals are there - there the streets are bedecked,
Where they have wrestling and where there are elephants,
There the one with lotus eyes, hurriedly went.

It is in the city of Mathurā, they say, his uncle lives,
Along with the elephant and horses that were sent (for him),
Kṛṣṇa the charming one went,

Avoiding our in-laws, we have come from our back doors,
We had trusted him the darling of the devotees,
He has utterly disappointed us all - alas!

Trusting Ranga completely - desirous of enjoying his
company we came,
Did he simply go away, betraying all of us,
He who is Maṇḍana Gopāla, the auspicious one?

On the hill by name Śeṣagiri, He, Hari is dwelling,
Purandaraviṭhala the Lord of Wealth,
Who is the possessor of thousands of names,
(Him, to possess we came). (70)

68) Srimad Bhāgavatam, Vol.2, Trnsl. N.Raghunathan, p.334.

69) B.H.P. X-47-10.

70) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds., Kṛṣṇalīlā, song 15.

The women in Gokula are singing the glory of little Kṛṣṇa. Purandaradāsa is placing the situation of Gokula in front of the listeners through the conversation between the gopis and Kṛṣṇa's mother Yaśodā. How a mother feels about her son when she is separated from him has been reflected very well here.

In the first two verses the incidents that made Kṛṣṇa leave for Gokula, are depicted. The words such as billu habbagalantē etc., tell of the bow-festival which Kāṁsa had arranged for killing Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. The mention of wrestling and elephants evidently proves that they were the demonic Muṣṭika and Cāṇūra, the wrestlers of Kāṁsa's court, and the great elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa, and then of the city of Mathurā and his maternal uncle Kāṁsa. By telling us that Kṛṣṇa went to Mathurā with the elephants and horses that were sent for him, the devotee has introduced Akrūra, indirectly, who came to accompany Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma to Mathurā.

These words are spoken by mother Yaśodā with grief, uneasiness, anxiety, and deep emotion. The ending such as 'mathurāpuravantē - māvakaṁsanantē ' - shows her seeming indifference rooted in deep depression and increases her concern for her son Kṛṣṇa.

The rest of the verses unfold the frustrated love of the gopis towards Kṛṣṇa. These lines reveal how the gopis would feel in Kṛṣṇa's absence. A verse from Madhvācārya's Kṛṣṇāmṛtamahārṇava may be observed in this context:

kṛṣṇe ratāḥ kṛṣṇāmanusmaranti tadbhāvitāstadgatamānasāśca /
bhinne'pi dehe praviśanti kṛṣṇaṁ haviryathā mantrahutaṁ hutāśe // (71)

"As the Havis offered to the sacred fire with the vedic chantings, enters the fire similarly the gopis though they are separate from Kṛṣṇa bodily, enter him having fallen in love with him, having emotionally involved themselves in him and having lost their mind to him". They had left their houses and had come to Yaśodā seeking

71) Madhvācārya, Kṛṣṇāmṛtamahārṇava, verse 48.

for Kṛṣṇa's company. Yaśodā spoke her heart to the gopis and the gopis spoke their heart to her. That was the way they could give an outlet to their great loss and at least try to lessen their sorrow. The word 'beloved of his devotees' used here speaks by itself of the relationship between the gopis and Kṛṣṇa.

- G) How fortunate are the Gopis of Gokula
For they are all singing with love the name of Śrīkānta.

While sitting and milking and while standing as
they pound the paddy grain,
And while sweeping, cleaning the house
While swinging the cradle to make their crying
babies sleep,
While churning the curds early in the morning.

While walking, while speaking, while having their meal,
While dressing and putting on ornaments;
While tying their hair with jasmine flowers, while
playing upon the swing
And while chewing tāmbūla (72) time and again.

At different times in different words
On different occasions of singing songs
Gopis are meditating upon the name -
Of Purandaravithala, the perfect One. (73)

This song reveals the love of the gopis towards their Kṛṣṇa. He was their very life. He had flooded their entire mind with no thoughts but of Himself. Whatever Kṛṣṇa did was like a miracle to them. Not even a single minute would pass without their uttering his name. Such was the love, such was the affection they had towards Kṛṣṇa.

They would carry out two things at a time, attending to their daily work and singing the glory of Kṛṣṇa. The second might have occupied a more prominent place in their lives than their own occupation.

72) Tāmbūla: Betel leaves + Arecanut with calcium and certain flavouring - a digestive chewed after meals.

73) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds.; Kṛṣṇalīlā, song 9.

The first two lines of the above song suggest much more than their apparent meaning. The reader can imagine what the gopis did with Kṛṣṇa. They played and danced with him. They now have been separated from Kṛṣṇa. When the gopis heard that Uddhava was coming from Mathurā with Kṛṣṇa's message, they attacked him and started scolding Kṛṣṇa for his cruelty in leaving them all. The gopis were mad about Kṛṣṇa and they could not bear separation from him. They loved Kṛṣṇa far beyond themselves. So when Uddhava came to their place all their anger towards Kṛṣṇa burst forth. Then Uddhava told them the words of Kṛṣṇa which were full of love and affection, and which also contained an explanation of their relationship with Him which was different from what the gopis had thought. At first they turned a deaf ear to these words but at last slowly they understood the truth and treated Uddhava well. The type of affection which the gopis developed after this incident is quite different from their previous sentiment. This is borne out by the song (74).

The following verse from the Bhāgavata makes interesting reading (75). "Verily the gopis are worthy to be on this earth and their life has become fruitful as they have their heart in Govinda the soul of all, to reach whom, those who dislike the life of this

- 74) Of course, the dasa might have sung this song imagining the fortunate gopis in Gokula when Kṛṣṇa was still with them commanding their minds with his dynamic personality.
- 75) It is true that one cannot always pinpoint a particular verse from either the Bhāgavata or other sources and say that Purandaradāsa or the other dasas have expanded their ideas from such a verse. But when a particular song appears to have a similar idea to that of a verse from the earlier source, mention has been made of such verses. Such verses, almost all of them being drawn from the Bhāgavata, are proof that these dasas were the followers of the Bhāgavatadharma.

world, the sages and we all long for. One who delights in the story of Anantha does not want even the state of Brahman in several births'(76).

Summary :

The gopis' love towards Krsna is beyond even the intensity of the love between a man and his wife because the love of God is as much as, or even more than, their love for each other. And to love god one needs no-one else's permission!

There are many songs dealing with the way Kṛṣṇa played with the gopis of which some appear at the outset-a little suggestive. But while one has to speak about Madhura-Bhāva, the question is of familiarity and a case of intimacy. There is no privacy between a lover and a beloved. But still, as these songs were going to be sung by many people, the question of propriety may arise. The thought that Purandaradāsa was a devotee of great repute, and that he had renounced family life in pursuit of the Lord, should however prevent people from making a hasty conclusion about this.

THE AVATĀRA SONGS.

Different incarnations of Viṣṇu also were source material for the dāśas. What Kṛṣṇa mainly did during each incarnation appears in such songs in a nutshell and almost all of these songs are couched in sentiments of Vātsalya and Madhura. These incarnations have just acted as supports to enrich the beauty of little Kṛṣṇa. The dāśas have cleverly worked on some aspect of Bālakṛṣṇa to incorporate these ten incarnations through indirect methods, and have tried their best to retain the innocence and other aspects of an active baby and boy.

In the Bhāgavata, Book 10 and Chapter 47, where the gopis show their pangs of separation from Lord Kṛṣṇa, their feelings give way to countless kinds of expression. One of them is called Bhramaragītā, 'the bee song', where the gopis in their intoxicated love tend to speak to the bees. This incorporates the life of Lord Viṣṇu and his achievements in his previous and forthcoming incarnations. This type of singing the glory of the Lord is very rarely found in Sanskrit (77). In the songs of the Haridāśas these ideas have emerged in a typical 'folk' form.

A) Yaśodā is fondling and playing with Kṛṣṇa while feeding him butter. She caresses as she plays with him singing the story relating to the deeds.

Open your palm my dear, O compassionate supreme;
Stretch your hands my little one, let me give you a
ball of butter.

Show me the hand on which you wear the gold rings,
Show me that which held with ease the conch and the wheel,
Show me the one that shines with the mark of a flag and
a lotus flower.

Stretch me the hand which played with the rounded breasts
of the gopis.

77) Gītagovindam of Jayadeva is another example where all the ten incarnations of Lord Viṣṇu appear in a single song.

Show me the hand that begged Avalakki (78) from a
poor brahmin,
Show me the hand which upheld the hill like an umbrella
and protected the cows,
Show me the one which tore open the very bowels of
Hiraṇyakaśipu,
Show me that hand which caressed the blessed Prahlaḍa.

Stretch forth that hand which sucked out the life of Pūtanā,
Stretch forth that hand which crushed the experienced
wrestlers,
Stretch out the hand which set right the hunch back
of the dwarf woman;
Stretch forth and show me your left hand that broke the bow.

Show the hand which deceived Bali and asked for alms;
Show me the hand that brought the Pārijāta tree (from heaven)
Show the hand which out of love drove the chariot
of Arjuna,
Show me the hand that placed flowers on the braided hair
of the Gopis.

Show me the hand which while playing stretched out to
invite the moon;
Show me the hand which forgave Indra who is the Lord of
heavens,
Show me the hand which plays on the flute in many varied
ways;
O Lord of Lakṣmī, dear child Purandaraviṭhala give me
please, your hand. (79)

In the pallavi (80) the devotee brings out the word
karuṇigālarasa - King of the compassionate, which emphasises the
quality that is the supreme attribute a devotee sees in the absolute.

The first verse by explaining the auspicious marks, i.e.,
the conch and wheel in his hand stresses the identity of Kṛṣṇa with
Viṣṇu. It also throws light on Kṛṣṇa's mischievous nature of playing
with the cowherd women and teasing them. In the last line of this

78) Parched rice.

79) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds., Kṛṣṇalīlē, song 14.

80) The beginning piece of a song is called pallavi.

verse Kṛṣṇa's relation with the gopis has been referred to the extent of intimacy.

The second verse, at the outset, recalls the story of Kṛṣṇa's childhood classmate, Sudāma who was very poor, and who by Kṛṣṇa's grace finally became very rich. And then it proceeds to recount his act of taking care of his devotees, viz., the people from his village by lifting the mountain Govardhana, and Prahlāda by killing his father Hiranyakaśipu.

The third verse recounts exaltation of the Lord's deeds in Kṛṣṇāvatāra in killing Pūtanā - a child murderer, and blessing a dwarf woman of the court of Kāṁsa, his uncle, and finally his killing his uncle.

When Bali having conquered the whole world proved to be its pest rather than a benefactor Kṛṣṇa assuming a dwarf's form went to the sacrifice Bali was performing, deceived him by asking for alms, and pushed him down to the underworld. The verse also narrates the episode of Kṛṣṇa bringing the sacred Pārijāta tree from Indra's heaven after having returned the ear-rings of Aditi (mother of the devas) which were snatched away by the demon Narakāśura. The third line is about Kṛṣṇa as a charioteer to Arjuna in the culminating war at Kurukṣetra in the epic Mahābhārata.

In the last verse the second line refers again to the Govardhanoddhāra incident, where the arrogant Indra was humiliated and at last was forgiven by Kṛṣṇa. The last line which has the expression 'give me your hand' is noteworthy. Upto this point the devotee who sang 'show me such a hand, show me that hand' and so on, at the end slowly slides into what he is moved to say - what his heart was full of, in the expression 'O Lord Purandaraviṭhala give me your hand'. That is what a devotee needs - the reassurance. Thus

Purandaradāsa has succeeded in ascribing the achievements of Viṣṇu and his various incarnations to little Kṛṣṇa's hand.

B) Come Gopamma, your little son is crying,
Come Gopamma,
He does not go to sleep to anybody's rocking the cradle,
Come Gopamma.

After playing in the water, he cries asking us to wipe
his body,
He cries for he lifted Mount Meru and thereby his body
is aching,
He cries as his jaws are hurting him for he lifted the
whole earth,
He cries for he looked at the intestines of the wicked
demon; so please come Gopamma.

He cries, for his little feet are aching as he measured
the ground,
He cries at having an axe behaving like an obstinate boy,
He cries out of fear having looked at the large group of
monkeys;
He cries for he cannot reach the butter placed high above,
come Gopamma.

He cries standing naked, asking us to hold him in our arms,
He cries asking us to make him sit on the famous horse,
The enemy of Mura does not go to sleep in the cradle; come
It is Purandaraviṭhala who is calling you on the earth,
please come Gopamma. (81)

Perhaps Yaśodā had asked one of the gopis to put Kṛṣṇa to
sleep in the cradle and had gone out to work. Little Kṛṣṇa does
not shut his eyes even for a second. The poor gopi had tried her
best swinging the cradle singing all the time but naughty Kṛṣṇa
would not go to sleep. Suddenly at this point the devotee
Purandaradāsa makes his presence felt through the words of the gopi,
who interprets every outburst of Kṛṣṇa's crying as referring to one
81) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds., Kṛṣṇalīlē, song 24.

of Viṣṇu's ten incarnations, again a case of dramatic irony. The setting cannot be more realistic in reflecting motherly love. The gopi could not make Kṛṣṇa sleep and could not stop him crying, she is not annoyed but is absorbed in giving metaphysical reasons for Kṛṣṇa's crying, a clear indication of her heart-felt love towards the child. Kṛṣṇa represents every child and Yaśodā and the gopis every mother.

From the first line of the first verse, each line until the 10th line represents one of Viṣṇu's incarnations. Thus ⁱⁿ line
1. Matsya (the Fish), 2. Kūrma (the Turtle), 3. Varāha (the Boar), 4. Narasimha (the Man Lion), 5. Vāmana (the Dwarf),
6. Paraśurāma (Rāma with an axe), 7. Śrī Rāma, 8. Kṛṣṇa, 9. Buddha
and 10. Kalki.

C) Listen Gopi, to the exploits,
of Gopāla in Gokula;
We cannot bear it; call him, Gopi,
And counsel your son Kṛṣṇa.

Slipping in at night ^{at} an opportune moment,
Finishing off the milk and butter,
Moving his hands on our breasts, he looks
With his eyes wide open!

When my husband was at home, he came
And spoke many naughty words,
Making mischief, the mighty one
Held my rounded breasts!

While we were at some other work,
He pulled our saris, Gopi,
When we saw who he was,
His face he bent it down!

As we were selling curds in the streets,
Kṛṣṇa came up, he
He stole our curds - seized the wives of others;
And shone in his fearsome form.

Should he play in our front yard and then

Ask for water humbly?

If I say 'come I will give you some water O Jalajākṣa (82)

He invites me to make love!

When we tried to hold him by the hand, taking him
for a child,

He caught hold of our wasit and hair,

If I threaten to tell his mother

He draws his chopping-knife and axe.

While all the gopis were bathing, Kṛṣṇa,

Snatching all their clothes,

Walked to the forest, heeded them not,

Though they humbly begged!

He eats and gives butter to his brother,

And beats the children of others,

Speaking cleverly and smearing it on our mouth,

He says that we ate the butter!

O Deer-eyed and snake-tressed Gopi,

Walking in our back streets,

The Cakrapāṇi showed his wiles,

Being to us unseen.

To the girls of the town the lotus-navelled one,

Was teaching the art of love,

Happy as they were, when their husbands came,

Kṛṣṇa rode a horse away.

Purandaraviṭhala the fulfiller of desires

Protects all on earth,

Though he annoys us time and again,

We can never live without him.

(83)

Yet again as has been observed in many of the previous songs,
the gopis have come with their complaints! This time they are more
in number and of different types as well!

Purandaradāsa does not want his Kṛṣṇa to grow up. But he

82) Lotus eyed one - Kṛṣṇa.

83) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds., Kṛṣṇalīlā, song 73.

does not depict Him in repeating the same prank again. The whole of the scriptures, the Ēpics and the purāṇas were at his finger tips. The idea of Viṣṇu's ten incarnations are adapted in this song in such an ingenious way to suit the framework of little Kṛṣṇa's exploits, yet implying the incarnation in it. It is very adroitly handled. Here, each verse sings separately of Kṛṣṇa's knavery and at the end brings a connection to one of his incarnations. Mostly the instances each verse reveals are not at all forced.

Thus in the first stanza when he says kangalaṇu tēṛēdu noḍuvanē 'He looks at us with wide open eyes'; His Fish incarnation, Matsyāvatāra can be guessed at. Understood as it is, it tells, of his stealth and his attempt to show that he was not frightened!

The second verse includes the words ūddandaḥkaṭhinaḥkāya 'big strong body' relating to the Turtle incarnation, Kūrmāvatāra. These words refer to the turtle for its shell is very strong, and also to young Kṛṣṇa for he was very sturdy and healthy even as a boy.

Moreyabāgidanē 'He bent his face down' these words of the 3rd verse refer to his Boar incarnation, Varāhāvatāra. The face of the boar is always bent. Here it is appropriate to Kṛṣṇa's reaction when the gopis turned to see who had pulled at their saris. He bent his face out of shyness.

Narasimha, Man-lion, the incarnation where His form is fearsome is suggested by the words ghorarūpadi mēṛēda 'shone in fearsome form'. The gopis were troubled by him for he had stolen their curds and teased them. When the gopis tried to catch him he frightened them perhaps by assuming a terrifying posture!

Viṣṇu in his Vāmana incarnation asked for arghya (84) from Bali and this idea is expressed in the words beḍuva jala dainyadi, 'he humbly asks for water'. Kṛṣṇa would play anywhere he liked and, when tired, might have asked for water!

Macca kōḍali toruvanē, 'shows sickle and axe' of the 6th verse is a link to his Paraśurāmāvatāra, wherein he held an axe in his hands. Here when Kṛṣṇa was warned by the gopis that they would tell his mother about his misbehaviour, he tried to frighten them by showing his toy chopping knife and axe.

Rāmāvatāra is to be understood by the words aḍavigē naḍēda 'He went to the forest', implying Rāma's going to the forest. Kṛṣṇa, in this instance, slipped away to the forest with the clothes of the gopis, as a naughty boy would.

The 8th and 9th verses are again Kṛṣṇa's exploits in Gokula. The 10th verse in its first half gives the clue to his Buddhāvatāra in the words tānu madana śāstrava peḷuta, 'He by telling them the art of love' and it is appropriate as Kṛṣṇa was always mixing with the gopis and speaking to them of love. The second half of this verse where it says kudurēyaneridanē, 'he rode the horse' hints at his future Kalki incarnation when he is supposed to come on a horse. While playing with the wives of others to run away when he realised that their husbands were coming, is like a mirror to his mischievous nature.

All these complaints are reported to Yaśodā by the gopis, not out of anger but out of affection. They themselves express this in the last verse. 'Though Kṛṣṇa upsets us again and again we cannot live without him'. That was Kṛṣṇa as the gopis liked to him to be.

84) Offering of a few drops of water during religious ceremonies.

Kṛṣṇa has the freedom to stay even in the innermost physical privacy as well as in the deepest mental privacy of his devotees. This is the real meaning of the often quoted adjective Sarvāntaryāmī Sarvāntarātmā. To such a soul there is no discrimination and no mean attribution. 'He came to everybody' (gopis) is allegorically a forceful expression of the all pervading aspect of the universal spirit.

Vātsalaya-Bhāva, parental love, and Madhurabhāva have overflowed from the mouth of Purandaradāsa and he does not care as to what should be said. At the same time, this over-joy has resulted in weakening the total effect of the song. eg. in the second verse to fit in the turtle incarnation of Viṣṇu the devotee has used the word uddaṇḍa kathinākāya. This does not suit well with little Kṛṣṇa though he was sturdy as a boy. Similarly verses 6, 7 9 and 10 have suffered as far as the beauty of the song are concerned.

D) In the following song the emphasis is on the visual impression received by the mother as her child frolics about. Kṛṣṇa as a child is playing with Yaśodā. His feet were moving hither and thither whenever Kṛṣṇa moved, and with anklets on, must have shone like lightning. The impression of these flying feet revealed to the mother the innumerable wonders those took place in Kṛṣṇa's life - past, present and future.

He, who is the darling of all children and a bewitching treasure

These are his feet which trampled the hostile demon Śakaṭāsura.

Having begged alms from Bali and having measured the earth,

These are the feet from which was born the river Ganga,
These are the feet which released Ahalyā from her curse,
Under which she had assumed the form of a rock for a long time.

These are the very feet that stilled the deep waters where
Kāṭiṅga lived;
And stamped on his hoods in terrible anger,
These are the feet that instantly pulled down,
And rolled the seat of the Kaurava Prince.

These are the feet which are lovingly soothed,
By the maidens along with Lakṣmī
And these are the feet,
Of Lord Sri Purandaraviṭhala.

(85)

The first refrain of the song gives an account of Kṛṣṇa's
childhood where he killed a demon - Śakaṭāsura, who came in the
form of a cart.

The first verse contains two different episodes regarding
Kṛṣṇa's life in his previous incarnations. The first half reflects
the incident of his Vāmanāvatāra where he, in the form of a dwarf,
begged Bali for alms and then measured the whole universe in three
steps, during which, from his left feet, the river Gaṅgā poured out
onto the earth. The poet has used the word jaladhī which verbally
means ocean but here it should be taken as the river Gaṅgā. The
second half of the verse is connected with the Ahalyā episode in
the Rāmāyaṇa. Ahalyā was cursed to become a stone by her husband
Gautama for her illicit relationship with Lord Indra. She soon
realised her mistake and caught hold of her husband's feet, begging
his forgiveness. The sage Gautama prophesied that when Rāma
touched her she would come back to her original form. Thus, when
Rāma was on his way to Janka's kingdom with Viśvāmitra on the
sages advice he touched the rock with his foot; Ahalyā reverted
to her original form.

The second stanza is again connected with Kṛṣṇa's boy-hood
where he punishes the poisonous serpent Kāṭiṅga and drives
him away from river Yamunā to the ocean. The latter half of this

verse deals with an incident that occurred in the Mahābhārata. Kṛṣṇa leaves for Hastināpura for peace talks with Duryodhana and others. He first meets Vidura, which Duryodhana considers to be an insult to him. When Kṛṣṇa came to his court everyone got up in order to show him their respect. Duryodhana alone did not move from his seat, intentionally. In order to teach him a lesson, Kṛṣṇa pressed the ground where he stood, with his feet; this resulted in a slope from there, up to Duryodhana's throne, which tipped over and Duryodhana rolled off and fell at the feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

The last verse describes Viṣṇu who was served by all celestials along with Lakṣmī.

A lesson indicated here is ^{the} subjugation of arrogance. One should be good and do good. One should not ignore others' thinking that one could get on with whatever one does. This may be the warning from Purandaradāsa to all the listners/readers through this song. Śakaṭāsura thought that he could easily kill Kṛṣṇa and he got killed himself. Bali wanted to rule the whole universe by his force and his pride was broken by Vāmana by pushing him to the nether world. Kāḷinga met with his destiny when he tried to come in the way of the happy village people, and what happened to arrogant Duryodhana is well known. In essence Purandaradāsa says "our God Purandaraviṭhala does not like such actions of arrogance". If one repented there would certainly be absolution. Bali, Kāḷinga and Ahalyā are the examples again. Thus one after the other the chain of thoughts of Kṛṣṇa's life goes on releasing on its own when one thinks of his feet.

It is a known fact that Kṛṣṇa's (Viṣṇu's) feet are much praised in the Epics and Purāṇas and it even appears that it is greatly because ^{of} Lord Viṣṇu's three strides, Viṣṇu became famous among all other deities (86)

Summary.

These songs on the theme of the different incarnations of Lord Viṣṇu are not perhaps so appealing when compared to the other types of song that Purandaradāsa has sung. The picture of Kṛṣṇa in such songs appears suddenly and soon becomes blurred. The theme itself is a little complicated as the other incarnations of Viṣṇu never appear to have entertained devotees^{to} so great an extent, perhaps with the sole exception of Rāma. Even Rāma's childhood has been sung by very few people. So to dig out words which would somehow bring out a child's psychology along with the devotees' intention of remembering the Lord's different incarnations is really a difficult task. To say that the dāsas have completely failed in this would be wrong. There are some songs in which they have succeeded very well, for example, song B, p.203. It appears by a study of these Avatāra songs that remembering the Lord's feats in his different incarnations was their main purpose. Madhvācārya in his Dvādaśa-Stotra, a devotional work on the Lord in twelve small chapters, has sung the glory of the Lord's different incarnations. Prior to this, in Jayadeva's Gīta-Govinda one can find such songs that extol the Lord's ten incarnations. Purandaradāsa and other dāsas have used these precedents and have added a new dimension to their works.

That the Haridāsas closely followed Bhāgavata could also be understood by the following point. In the Harivaṃśa and the Viṣṇupurāṇa Balarāma had to remind Kṛṣṇa of his God-hood during the Kālīya incident. But this has never found expression in the Bhāgavata. Maybe it is because that if Kṛṣṇa needed somebody to tell him what He really was would be like under-estimating his capacity. To avoid this the above quoted incident has been omitted from the Bhāgavata. While singing the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu the dāsas have not included Balarāma as he is not considered an Avatāra of Viṣṇu in the South.

KṚṢṆA THE SOURCE OF JOY AND BEAUTY.

The dāśas are not at all tired of singing and praising the beauty of the Lord. The more they sing, the more their vision of Him becomes widened. His form is so captivating and enchanting that however much one tries to describe it, one always finds that words are inadequate. This dissatisfaction and failure the dāśas felt in what they had sung, is indeed a source of satisfaction to the readers to obtain these countless views of Kṛṣṇa so dear and near to their hearts.

A) How did Kṛṣṇa look? Purandaradāsa in one of his songs gives a beautiful picture of little Kṛṣṇa.

Eyes these are, and these are the ears;
yes indeed that is the mouth,
Those see, hear and sing the glory of
The Company of Veṅugopāla the charioteer.

Who wears the garland of young Tulāsi leaves
And plays with young cowherds
Who happily wanders under the shady trees
Him, Naḷinanābha whose smile is hypnotic (behold him).

Who dances like a swan, and wanders like a peacock,
And like a young Kokila produces a cry,
Who jumps and slips as would a small deer,
And surpasses a young bee in humming, (behold him)

Wearing garlands of jasmine flowers,
And braiding with them the tresses of lovely girls,
He sports in water and plays in the forests,
Him the attractive and broad-eyed one, (behold him).

He who plays on his golden flute,
Attracting birds and animals;
With hundreds of gopis, forgetting himself,
Who danced on moonlight nights,

Who corrected the crookedness of the hunch-
back dwarf-woman
And was held by his dhoti by her (87)
The store-house of compassion and the protector
of the devotees,
Him, Purandaraviṭhala, the Lord of Ramā (behold him). (88)

Kṛṣṇa has a garland of young shoots of the Tulasī plant, Basil (*Ocimum basilicum*), and also he wears garlands of other flowers. He is surrounded by his friends the cowherds and is smiling all the time. His walking, dancing, singing, playing and humming all surpass those of a swan, a peacock, a cuckoo, a deer and a bee. If he played on his flute not only men and women but also birds and animals would listen to him forgetting themselves. He danced with gopis, playing his flute on moonlit nights. The eyes which see him thus, the ears which listen to his music and the mouth which sings his glory are the real eyes, ears and mouth. This may be called Svarūpa-Bhakti by which the devotee sings and praises the lovely form of his Lord, as if in a trance. Two verses from Madhvācārya's Kṛṣṇāmṛtamahārṇava may be cited

87) The last stanza of this song is concerned with the story of Trivakrā a maid servant in the court of Kāṁsa. She was a dwarf and hunch-back, and was cured by Kṛṣṇa. In the Bhāgavata it is said: As soon as Kṛṣṇa touched her with his magic hands she blossomed with beauty and admirable qualities. A desire was born in her mind to join him, so holding his dhoti, smiling she said "I want to be together with you". B.H.P. X-42-9
The same words are repeated here sṛagapīḍisi kōṁbana 'who was held by his dhoti by the dwarf'. Kṛṣṇa blessed her. When he could bless a woman who was a dwarf and hunch-back just for smearing some scents on his body can he not bless a devotee who meditates upon his name always? This example is an assurance to devotees that certainly he blesses them, who even happen to sing and dance remembering Him.

88) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds., Kṛṣṇalīlē, song 81.

in this regard.

sā jihvā yā hariṁ stauti taccittam yattadarpaṇam /
tāveva kevalau ślāghyau yaṁ tatpūjākarau karau // Verse 75.

"That is the tongue which sings in praise of Lord Hari and that is the mind which is offered to Him. Only those pairs of hands are worthy that worship Lord Hari."

carāṇau tau tu saphalau keśavālayagāminau /
te ca netre mahābhāga yābhyāṁ sandṛśyate hariḥ // Verse 83.

"Those are the deserving feet that take one to the abode of Lord Keśava and those are the eyes by which Lord Hari is beheld."

These and other verses cited here and there in connection with the songs of these Haridāsas evidence the unity of the thoughts, feelings and experience of pious minds in their pursuit of their ideal.

B) Look at the beauty of Kṛṣṇa

The bestower of happiness to Gokula.

He is dancing, producing different sounds,
Through the anklets and jingling bells he wears.

Putting on a necklace with a pendant to tie,
joining all his friends,
Kṛṣṇa who is shining in dazzling colours,
With the ornament he has on his curly hair
(look at the beauty).

The bell on his waist makes a jingling sound,
So He holds it carefully in his hands,
And while he wanders eagerly around,
He plays rather attractively
(look at so charming a Kṛṣṇa)

Full of wonder and curiosity,
Our Purandaraviṭhala rejoices,
Him who blessed us with many comforts,
Bālakṛṣṇa the lotus-eyed one, you all see. (89)

89) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds., Kṛṣṇalīlā, song 20

Little Kṛṣṇa is charming by nature. Then, what about when he is decked with lovely ornaments? Kālidāsa in his world-famous play Abhijñānaśākuntalam says thus:

kimiva hi madhurāṇām maṇḍanam nākṛtīnām (90)

"What is not an ornament to such forms which are beautiful by nature?". This completely agrees in the case of Kṛṣṇa here. Wearing anklets and jingling bells he roams about producing musical sounds with his small, delicate steps dancing at times. One more thing added to his beauty was his curly hair. In this instance he is wearing an ornament in that lock of hair and it is shining, giving more charm and attraction to his walk while playing with his friends.

The second carana is suggestive of Kṛṣṇa's knavery through its second line where the gopis mention that he was carefully holding the bells of his waist-band while eagerly he was wandering here and there (Perhaps to avoid the sound of the bells in order to carry out his mischief uninterrupted). Thus he would be always a source of joy to those who lived around him.

Sulādi and Ugābhoga songs.

Sulādi (91) is a kind of song, a special contribution of the Haridāśas to Kannada literature, where different parts of the song are sung to different rhythmic patterns. These are usually five, but occasionally this may vary. Probably to express a chain of different kinds of thoughts which are connected to one another the dāśas made use of such compositions. These songs are usually longer than other types of compositions and help one to express

90) Kālidāsa - Abhijñānaśākuntalam I-20

91) For a detailed study of Sulādis and Ugābhogas please see the English introduction by R.Satyanarayana to Kṛṣṇalīlē edited by Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri and Huccarāva Bengeri.

one's thoughts in an extended manner. One or two examples may be seen.

A) Here is a picture of little Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma in the village of Vṛja-Gokula.

O' thunderbolt, O' lightning, please do not emerge roaring,
O' King of clouds, please do not pour down,
O' Mother Earth, be shining and shimmering
Adorned with various kinds of gems.
For, with various kinds of ornaments,
To their ears, hair, forehead, arms
And to their feet, jingling bells that produce
rhythmic sounds,
Balarāma and Gopālakṛṣṇa who is Purandaraviṭhala
Are coming, rejoicing, crawling on their knees.

Little charming Kṛṣṇayya has cut several teeth
that look like jasmine buds,
When I asked "hey open your mouth, let me look"
(He opened) There I saw the whole universe.
He is not like any other boy.
To those who know him he is Purandaraviṭhala
The protector of the universe .. our little Kṛṣṇa has
cut a few teeth.

Placing the cup of butter on his lap,
Together with his elder brother Balarāma,
With his knees firmly placed on the floor he scoops
handfulls of butter.
Gopi ask him: Will he open his eyes?
Is Purandaraviṭhala an ordinary little boy!?

Ha! I got the hand, the butter, here is his palm.
This, this is his little mouth and here the butter is
pouring down.
Here, see here, Gopi your son he is a thief
Come and see, we have caught him.
If you keep him under control it is safer.
Or we will spank this Purandaraviṭhala.

O'dark-cloud-hued and smooth bodied Rangayya,
Are you feeling hungry? Please come and drink your milk.

O Purandaraviṭhala Gopālakṛṣṇa

I cannot tolerate you stealing milk, curds and butter.

O Purandaraviṭhala, O little Gopālakṛṣṇa,

Please see that I remember you everyday. (92)

The simplicity with which the dāsa has brought out these very homely feelings is stunningly beautiful and, the naturalness makes the singer, listener and the reader loose himself to the warmth and love generated through the popular words used. The picture of charming little Kṛṣṇa pervades every mind and rules it for a long time.

B) Given below are portions of another Sulādi song by Purandara-dāsa.

'The yellow dress is wet with milk and curds,
The cheek of kambukandhara is smeared with butter,
Aṃbujanābha (where all) you stole and ate?'
I saw such a scared Kṛṣṇa who was questioned like
this by the Gopi,
This Udūpi Kṛṣṇa Purandaraviṭhala,
Who is the father of Brahma has become a little
boy here!

In one hand he holds the churning rod,
And the churning rope with the other,
Looking at the face of his mother, this Nanda's son,
Udūpi Kṛṣṇa, Purandaraviṭhala,
Happily danced all around with his tiny feet.

My little angel, Udūpi Kṛṣṇa, Purandaraviṭhala,
I will never leave your lotus feet. (93)

There is very little poetic beauty as such in the verses mentioned above. But the impact of these lines when one finishes

92) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds., Kṛṣṇalīlē, song 10.

93) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds., Kṛṣṇalīlē,
song No.92, verses 3 and 5, with the concluding couplet.

listening to them, or reading them, is in no way less to any allegorical poetry. This is a case of Svabhāvokti (94). The well-rehearsed material of Kṛṣṇa, a baby and a boy, and the very naive and the natural Kannada village atmosphere creates a spring of sublime joy.

Ugābhoga: What Ugābhoga represents is still a matter to be decided. These are very close to the Vacanas of the Vīraśaivas as there is very little poetic quality as such found in them. They are closer to prose than poetry. They express a particular feeling of the devotee-poet towards his theme predominantly devotional, spiritual and religious. Śrī R.Satyanarayana writes "It consists of a simple and short theme in one or more sentences, it is often prose, though occasionally one ^{comes} across a prosodial structure and poetic characteristics" (95).

An Ugābhoga of Purandaradasa is given below:

Having laid down on the lap (of Yaśodā) drinking milk
from a small cup, you grew up.
You had the universe in your very stomach,
And you measured the whole universe in your tiny steps,
O Purandaraviṭhala, the Lord of the Universe,
My salutations to your childhood pranks. (96)

Lord Kṛṣṇa's wonderful fun has astonished the Dāsa. He
has the whole universe in his stomach yet now he is drinking a

94) Svabhāvokti is when a person's experience finds an outlet
through words as naturally as it is revealed to him.

95) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds., Kṛṣṇalīlē,
English introduction, p.71.

96) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds., Kṛṣṇalīlē, song 11.

spoonful of milk given by his mother. He has measured the whole world with his strides (in Vāmanāvatāra), but now he is lying on the lap of his mother as a baby. The contrast between these two, his capacity to become greater than the greatest and as small as a child has made the Dāsa dumb with admiration, and he has no words with which to adore him.

Every movement, every action of Kṛṣṇa evoked a joyous expression from those around him and this joy resulted in a song. Thus every step a baby takes, and every wink of his eye, every gesture of his very being is a source of joy and pleasure. This is true for any baby in this universe. Kṛṣṇa as a baby held a very special place indeed.

13. KANAKADĀSA.

Kanakadāsa is believed to have lived as a contemporary of Purandaradāsa during the 16th century A.D. There is no firm evidence of the actual date of Kanakadāsa's life time. Purandaradāsa himself mentions Kanakadāsa in one of his songs and since Purandaradāsa's dates are almost certainly 1484-1564 this gives a lower limit for Kanakadāsa.

There are many stories of the life of Kanakadāsa. Most of them state that he was the son of a shepherd, Bīrappa, and that his mother was Baccamma. Another version is that Kanakadāsa was a hunter. All that is certain is that he was referred to as a low-caste person. This is evident from many of his songs and also from the stories connected with his life and miracles.

Kanakadāsa's father is said to have been a fief of a certain place which belonged to the kings of Vijayanagar. Naturally Timmappa, as Kanakadāsa was then known, had a good training as a soldier. He is said to have found some gold while digging in his garden, after which his name was changed to Kanaka meaning 'gold', and also that he used that money to build the temple of Ādikeśava at Kāginēlē (1).

It seems that Kanakadāsa was not happy in his life: he lost his parents and even his beloved wife within a very short period. These bereavements seem to have affected him to the point of

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- 1) When I was talking to Śrī Bannanjē Govindācārya during my field work tour an interesting point emerged. Timmappa might not have acquired the name Kanaka just because he is known to have found gold in his back garden. His songs and his literary work are great contributions and they show his learning, inborn humility and depth of devotion and this might have brought him the name 'Kanaka' meaning ^{gold} Gold - gold among the Haridāsas. This interpretation also looks appropriate. /

obsession. At the same time, it is said that Lord Keśava used to appear in his dreams and ask him to become his devotee. It may be that Kanakadāsa was deluded as a result of his mental anguish, and it is certain that he ignored that voice. He was still young and had some interest in worldly affairs for he had a good place in society.

One day while Kanakadāsa was participating in a battle he was severely wounded. The pain was unbearable. It must have seemed to him that the world was full of misery and distress, pain and suffering. His mind must have recollected his own past and forthwith he was transformed into a devotee, disregarding that worldly happiness which seemed to him temporary. This incident in the hands of devotees might later have been interpreted with a different result. It is told that in the battlefield where Kanaka had fallen wounded, the Lord presented himself in disguise and asked Kanaka to be a devotee, dāsa, of the Lord, and then He would make him free from all sufferings. Kanaka agreed. He was cured and from that day onwards he was known by the name Kanakadāsa. The mind of Kanakadāsa which once rejected the notion that the world is full of difficulties, was forced to accept the same by the situation which he had to face. This theme is clearly visible in most of his songs.

After the above incident Kanakadāsa, having given all his belongings to others, came to Hampi which was the centre of saintly people. There also he had to face humiliation when he was accepted as a disciple by Śrī Vyāsarāya, the mentor of Purandaradāsa. Certain other disciples who were studying under Vyāsarāya objected to Kanakadāsa joining their group. But, through his personality, deep knowledge of scriptures, and his devotion, Kanakadāsa overcame all prejudices. Once, it is told, that Śrī Vyāsarāya gave a banana to each of his students and asked them to eat it in a place where nobody could see them. Later in the day the teacher questioned

his pupils on what they had done with their fruit and how and where they had eaten it. The answers given were various. One had hid behind the door, one had covered himself^{up} in a blanket, another went to a place of ruins and so on. Every one had managed to eat their banana. When it came to Kanakadāsa's turn to explain he took the banana out saying that he could find no place where he could be alone. God was everywhere. This story, wherein Kanaka scored over other students, is a fine example of how his mind was engrossed^s / in God even at that early stage.

Another such incident is also well-known. Once the master asked his students who would go to Vaikunṭha (Lord Viṣṇu's abode). Nobody dared say a word; Kanakadāsa stood up and said 'I should go'. All were appalled! They thought that Kanakadāsa was blasphemous and that he would be punished by the teacher. The teacher knew that Kanaka was not such a disciple as to show his arrogance. So he waited until everyone calmed down and then revealed the meaning of Kanaka's words to his students; if the ego 'I' is removed then anybody can go to Vaikunṭha (2).

Purandaradāsa himself has sung in a song the greatness of Kanakadāsa and realates this story.

'Kanakadāsana melē dayamāḍalu vyāsamuni (3)

This song shows that Kanakadāsa was abused along with his master Vyāsarāya by all who belonged to that maṭha where Vyāsarāya was teaching. Purandaradāsa, though a member of an upper caste family transcended the feelings of caste and praised Kanakadāsa. It reveals how open-minded Purandaradāsa was, in fact, he could not have been otherwise with the wealth of experience in devotion he had.

Kanakadāsa seems to have been an admirer of Śrī Rāmānuja in

2) nānu hodarē hogabahudu is the Kannada line in question.

3) Purandaradāsarakīrtanē, Part 1, song 215.

his earlier days. In some songs he has praised and offered his salutations to Rāmānuja (4); also ⁱⁿ the song starting with Rāmānujarē namo namo (5). But later he became the disciple of Śrī Vyāsarāya who was a follower of Madhva. By nature Kanakadāsa is opposed to the caste system. Perhaps as a result of his earlier bitter experiences as a low-caste person he expresses himself in a forthright manner! In his later songs he has expressed ideas which have transcended these feelings.

In a song which starts kula kula kulavēndu (6) he asks 'do you know the caste of water? Is not the water the origin of all beings? Life is as unstable as the bubble of water. So, having understood this reality, poor man, pray to the Lord'.

Kanakadāsa's songs are not many in number when compared with those of Purandaradāsa. His talents can be seen in the following works: a) Narasimhastuti in praise of Lord Narasimha; b) Naḷacaritrē; c) Mohanatarangiṇi; d) Haribhaktisāra; and e) Rāmadhānyacaritrē. Though he came from a low caste, his poetic talent, his erudition in scriptures, and his devotion towards the Lord took him to a level even greater than many of those who came from the upper castes. His life itself was a proof that there was no discrimination amongst his creation and it is only one's behaviour that counts.

Kanakadāsa had a very hard life when compared with the other dāsas, for the difficulties he had to face throughout his life were great. The reason is very simple. He was of low caste. Even today in India, where the caste system is losing its prominence there are instances of members of so-called low-caste families being

4) R.C. Hiremaṭha, ed.; Kanakadāsara Mohanatarangiṇi, I-2,3 & 4.

5) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds.; Śrī Kanakadāsara Hāḍugaḷu, song 4.

6) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds.; Śrī Kanakadāsara Hāḍugaḷu, song 121.

harassed by the rest. Such being the case one can well imagine the plight of Kanakadāsa, who lived at a time when society was more rigid. Members of his caste were not allowed to enter the temples and the study of the scriptures such as the Vedas and the Upaniṣads was not allowed. It was under these circumstances that he yet earned the knowledge of the Vedas, the Upaniṣads, the Rāmāyaṇa, the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas. The mental stress and sorrow created by these circumstances have come out very strongly in many of his songs. His position among Haridāśas may be compared to that of Tōṇṭaratippōṭiy Ālvār among the Tamil Vaiṣṇava devotees and to Nantanār among the sixty three Nāyanmār, the Tamil Śaiva saints.

As far as most of the other dāśas are concerned they all came from higher castes and they had the opportunity of a good education and were better off in society, for it was dominated by their own people. They were all Kṛṣṇa devotees and had inherited Kṛṣṇa-Bhakti from their forefathers. But for a man like Kanakadāsa who came from a low caste even to quote from these sacred texts was no simple matter; it would have been interpreted as sacrilegious. Of course Kanakadāsa did become a disciple of Vyāsarāya and studied under him. But he already possessed the basic knowledge that qualified him to join Vyāsarāya's group. It is well known that a number of other disciples of Vyāsarāya except Purandaradāsa objected to Kanaka's admittance to the school and that Kanakadāsa had to prove his eligibility and superiority in order to silence the dissenters.

Being sensitive, Kanakadāsa must have found it very difficult to accept the injustice of the caste system. His people had no hope in society and no voice at all. On occasions he must have lost control over himself, and felt strongly enough to pour out his thoughts concerning such abuses. But unless he obtained a recognisable position and respect in society his voice had no value. This

he seems to have understood. The Vijayanagara empire was by that time famous for its cultural patronage and stability of reign and also for its saintly people, and perhaps the fame of Vyāsarāya the teacher was also widespread. He was a man who valued qualities in men rather than their birth. Kanakadāsa heard about this and naturally went there and appealed to Śrī Vyāsarāya to accept him as his disciple. Kanakadāsa might have heard some of the songs of Purandaradāsa, in which Purandaradāsa had criticised the unhealthy practices of society. The rest of the incidents whereby Kanakadāsa was accepted and became one of Vyāsarāya's star-disciples is well-known.

Kanakadāsa's position in society was established by the fact that he became Vyāsarāya's disciple and also by the fact that Purandaradāsa admired him. He consolidated this by proving his superior understanding of Vyāsarāya's philosophy in the process of his acceptance by all the dissenting disciples. He was able to feel thereby more secure than before. This must be the time when Kanakadāsa sang many of his songs and expressed forcibly those feelings which he had suppressed for the past several years. Possibly his background gave him more force to pour out his heart. By nature he was a poet and also a great devotee. He was no more afraid of society. Whenever and wherever he felt like speaking the truth he spoke out fearlessly. A person born in a high caste criticising society or his own fellow-men is not special though it demands broadmindedness. But for a person like Kanakadāsa who came from a low-caste family - to speak about others and criticise their mistakes irrespective of their caste, required a great deal of moral courage and will-power. Yet his way of expressing his ideas shows his inborn humility. His unflinching devotion to the Lord was second to none.

Because of the deeds of my last birth, I am born
in this world Kṛṣṇa!

O ocean of compassion, O lotus-navelled one
O my little Kṛṣṇa you must protect me.

Ever since I was born, I experienced no happiness,
Listen to me Kṛṣṇa, I struggled all the way.
As if a baby left in its cradle by its mother,
I withered in utter desolation.
The world at large does not touch me.
But chases me and pushes me away.
If you do not solve my difficulties,
Kṛṣṇa, the fault will be yours. (7)

Kanakadāsa while saying that the world at large does not touch him
has indirectly expressed his pitiable position in society. In
another song dāsadāsara manēya (8) he says: "I am a servant
of every devotee's house. Śrīśa, Śrī Ranga, a servant in your house.
I am a low-born servant to many of the dāsas (devotees). I am,
curse me, a dāsa without caste. O Ranga, the purifier, I am a
Hōlēya, an outcast dāsa. Please protect me Ādikeśava and give me
salvation."

It is difficult even to imagine how depressed Kanakadāsa
must have been to sing like this. The mood evokes not only
humility but a surrender where the devotee can sense the extent of
his own insignificance. It recalls a very similar sentiment
expressed by the royal poet Kulacekara Ālvār in his composition
Mukundamālā . There he says -

majjanmanah phalamidaṁ madhukaiṭabhāre,
matprārthanīyamaṇugraha eṣa eva /
tvadbhṛtyabhṛtyapariṇāśakabhṛtyabhṛtya
bhṛtyasya bhṛtya iti māṁ smara lokanātha // (9)

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- 7) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds.; Śrī Kanakadāsara
Hāḍugaḷu, song 8.
8) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds.; Śrī Kanakadāsara
Hāḍugaḷu, song 23.
9) Kulacekara Ālvār, Mukundamālā, verse No.30.

"O Kṛṣṇa the enemy of Madhu and Kaiṭabha, this is the real fruit of my life and this only is the object of my prayer, and your blessings on me i.e., please consider me to be the servant of the servant of your servant. That is enough for me!" Perhaps Kanakadāsa was dejected and mentally afflicted. In a song which begins tallaṇisadiru kaṇḍya tālu manavē (10) he says: "Do not get agitated O my mind, be patient. The Lord protects all unfailingly. For a tree grown atop a hill, who builds a basin and waters it? The Lord who created it, it is his duty; He gives and protects. Doubt this not." Here Kanakadāsa is consoling himself. May be he felt sad for people who could not understand His creation, and also for himself for everywhere he was treated badly. He is addressing himself as well as others, assuring them who are like him not to lose heart. "Do not worry for what you are now; He will protect everybody - does He not protect a tree grown on top of a hill? Does He not protect animals and birds in the forest? Does He not protect the frog inside a rock?".

In another song, kula kula (11) he states: 'Caste! Caste! they shout; what caste is there for those who are pious? Do they not bring and offer lotus flowers from the mire to the lotus-navelled one? Do the brahmins not drink on earth milk which comes from the cow's flesh?'.

Kanakadāsa was certainly disgusted with the world which was cruel to him. In his songs there is criticism, there is depth of feeling, there is pain and there is also hope and devotion. Kanakadāsa quotes instances from the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas where Kṛṣṇa has showered his blessings upon his devotees no matter how lowly, whether he or she uttered his name in whatever situation

10) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds.; Śrī Kanakadāsara Hāḍugaḷu, song 43.

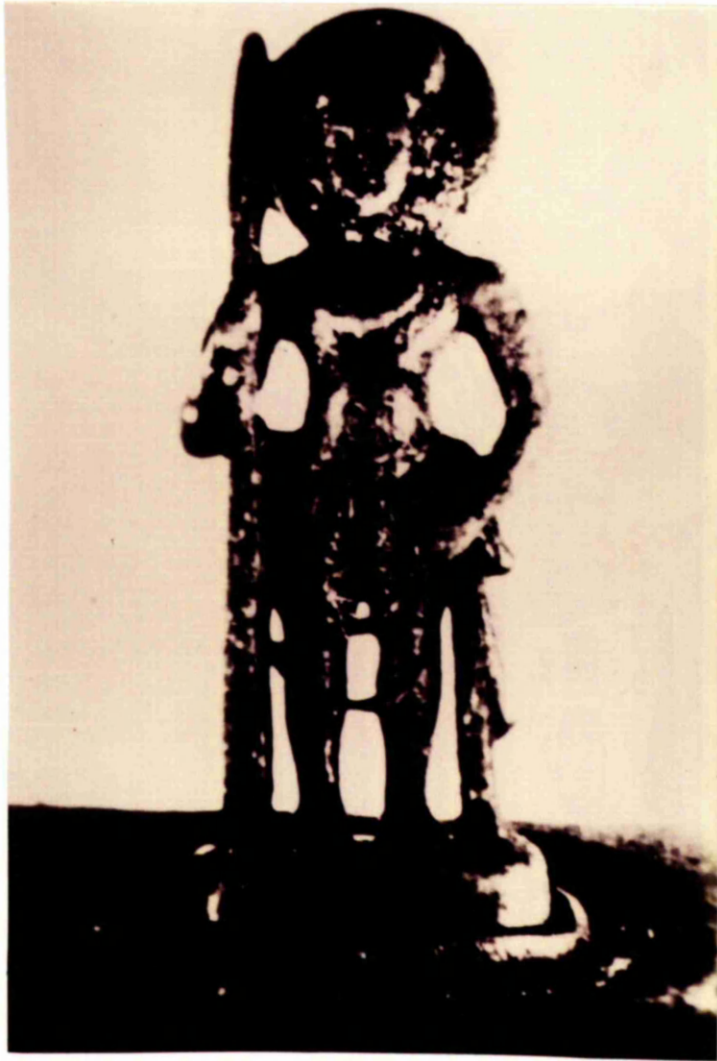
11) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds.; Śrī Kanakadāsara Hāḍugaḷu, song 120

he or she might have been. When he visited Udupi the priests and other so called devotees chased Kanakadāsa out of the temple. He was not allowed even to have a darśan, 'sight' of the Lord. It is believed that Kanakadāsa sang this song bāgilanu tēṛēdu sevēyanu kōḍu hariyē (12) then: "Open the door and please let me serve you" The song continues giving instances of Kṛṣṇa's grace towards his devotees" you saved the elephant, an animal, from the mouth of a crocodile. You blessed Prahlāda - the son of a demon, you protected Draupadī and also you gave salvation to Ajāmīḷa (who till his death, never uttered Kṛṣṇa's name) just when they called your sweet name! Why can you not hear my crying? Please open the door and let me serve you!"

Another song, also supposed to have been sung on the same occasion which has been quoted already, runs in a similar vein: "my friends and relatives are chasing me, I am such a child whose mother went away deserting me. Show me a path at least".

The Lord, Kṛṣṇa at last heard Kanakadāsa's cry, an outburst of sorrow. What does it matter to Him whether he is low-born or of a higher caste? It is enough if he is His devotee. Was it Kanakadāsa's mistake to have been born in a low caste? That the Lord would never disappoint a deserving devotee became true when he gave darsan to Kanakadāsa at the back of the temple in Udupi, through a hole which was formed just for him. Even today there is that opening in the west end of the temple of Udupi where the structure broke away. The Lord turned towards the new 'window' and Kanakadāsa had his eyeful of Kṛṣṇa in all his childlike splendour.

Probably after this incident Kanakadāsa's fame spread far and wide and he no longer had to endure all the abuse that was his common lot till then. Though Kanakadāsa, in his early life as a dāsa had an inclination to pour out the feelings he experienced



Udupi Kṛṣṇa holding the churning rod in his hand

being low-born, he gradually changed in his later life. As one goes on understanding the highest principle - one gradually conquers human weaknesses. When one reaches the highest level of Bhakti one hates nobody, neither does one remember one's past sufferings. Swami Vivekananda says "When Bhakti has become ripe and has passed into that form which is called the Supreme (para), , no more is there any fear of these hideous manifestations of fanaticism; that soul which is overpowered by this higher form of Bhakti is too near the God of Love to become an instrument for the diffusion of hatred." (13). This could be realised when one sees the later songs of Kanakadāsa.

The child Kṛṣṇa in Kanakadāsa's Mohanataranginī.

As mentioned earlier, apart from devotional songs using social, religious, moral and reformatory themes, and the theme of Kṛṣṇa's childhood, Kanakadāsa as a writer has also contributed a few other long literary compositions. Of these, Nalacaritrē, Mohanataranginī, Rāmadhānyacaritrē, Haribhaktisāra are notable ones. Mohanataranginī in particular, has certain aspects of Kṛṣṇabhakti which needs to be discussed in the context of this thesis. The subject matter is particularly concerned in looking at the childhood and boyhood life of Kṛṣṇa as depicted by Kanakadāsa and Purandaradāsa. A bird's eye view of Mohanataranginī is taken up here as this work, while mainly dealing with the romance of Uṣā, the daughter of Baṇāsura, a great Śivabhakta, and Aniruddha, Kṛṣṇa's grandson, also illustrates time and again Kṛṣṇa's exemplary life. The importance of this work lies in its unique description of Viṣṇubhakti on one side and Śivabhakti on the other, and the way Kanakadāsa has finally blended the two separate bhakti cults symbolically in the union of Uṣā and Aniruddha. Though the theme

is a borrowed one from the Mahābhārata, Harivaṃśa, Viṣṇupurāṇa and the Bhāgavatapurāṇa and other works, the poet-devotee has shown his own broad-mindedness when he composed this work in uniting Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism although he himself was a Vaiṣṇavaite and probably a follower of Rāmānuja (14).

The title of the work Mohanatarangiṇī, is metaphorical and allegorical. It also can be translated literally: Mohana means 'enchanting' and taranga 'waves'; tarangiṇī is a 'receptacle for the waves'. Thus Mohanatarangiṇī means an 'enchanting ocean'. The word Mohana is popularly attributed to Kṛṣṇa and hence the title would indicate 'Kṛṣṇa in Waves', or 'Waves produced in an ocean'. This gives a figure in the manner of Aniruddha being produced in Kṛṣṇa's family. Scholars interpret the title in several other ways too.

A study of the work helps to justify the significance of its title. In the first few chapters Kṛṣṇa appears with his wife Rukmiṇī and then afterwards rarely is he dominant except in the end wherein Śiva and Viṣṇu come together symbolically representing the oneness of Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism. The love-story of Uṣā and Aniruddha is spread out in between. Every chapter at the beginning in one way or the other depicts the glory of Lord Hari. Sometimes this contains clues as to his childhood and boyhood pranks and at times reveals Kṛṣṇa's greatness in different ways. Thus, when the whole work represents an ocean and the chapters its emerging waves, Kṛṣṇa is brought by Kanaka at the beginning of each of these chapters, representing the peak of each wave, thus making the title very appropriate. The whole composition is in the form of a conversation between Kanakadāsa and his wife. Here are a few verses that reveal the Kṛṣṇa in Mohanatarangiṇī.

14) R.C. Hiremaṭha, ed., Kanakadāsara Mohanatarangiṇī, I-2,3 & 4.

The poet prays at the outset, "To know his greatness and to sing the glory of Lord Kṛṣṇa who is your father is highly impossible for us. So, O four-headed Brahma, Lord of the Goddess of Knowledge, please come to me"(15).

Kanakadāsa's wife is curious. She asks, 'My beloved, by the grace of Him, who slumbers on the leaf of a banyan tree, continue the story for the pleasure of my hearing' (16). She continues, 'Tell me the forthcoming incidents from the depth of your heart concerning Him who is beauty personified, whose feet are worshipped by the Gods, who is Govinda and, who held the Govardhana mountain in His palm' (17).

In the eleventh chapter the poet comes to his beloved subject, Kṛṣṇa's boyhood, bringing out what He did as a child and a boy: "Beware, these are the feet that broke the pride of Yamalārjūnas who were in the form of trees. These are the feet that kicked and destroyed Śakaṭa who came in the form of a cradle. These are the feet that unhesitatingly stamped on the hood of the serpent Kāliya in Kālindī. These are the very feet that swiftly felled the uncle Kāṁsa and stamped on him' (18). Kanakadāsa is telling his wife the way Kṛṣṇa walked towards the lake to swim, a small incident of the present story. When he looked at Kṛṣṇa's feet his devoted mind automatically brought out the episodes associated as stated above which occurred in Kṛṣṇa's boyhood days.

A beautiful picture of Bālakṛṣṇa emerges in the verse:

kangōlisuva kadahavaneri .. (19). "Please tell me of such

15) R.C. Hiremaṭha, ed., Kanakadāsara Mohanatarangīni, I-9

16) R.C. Hiremaṭha, ed., Kanakadāsara Mohanatarangīni, I-1

17) R.C. Hiremaṭha, ed., Kanakadāsara Mohanatarangīni, XI-1

18) R.C. Hiremaṭha, ed., Kanakadāsara Mohanatarangīni, XIV-20,21

19) R.C. Hiremaṭha, ed., Kanakadāsara Mohanatarangīni, XXXI-1

auspicious feet of Ranga that climbed the sacred tree, jumped on Kāṇḍa's hood and broke the serpent's pride." The folk-word 'Ragna' implies baby Kṛṣṇa and its usage fills the entire song with parental love. The verse sakala brahmāṇḍa .. (20) extols Kṛṣṇa's supreme Godhead. It states 'though he has the whole universe in his stomach he took birth in Devakī's womb. What a conjurer, māyāvi he is'. An incident in the Bhāgavata wherein Lord Brahma stole all the cowherds and cows in Kṛṣṇa's absence and the latter being aware of this, created exact replicas of those who were abducted, is remembered in the following verse: Karugāhigola (21). Kanaka says that though Pūtānā breast-fed Kṛṣṇa poisonous milk, he blessed her so that she felt like his mother, though that was short-lived (22). In saying so, Kanakadāsa's firm belief is that He does not do harm even to those who harm him. He, after all, is the father of the universe (23).

Kanaka's beloved continues: 'I am never tired, my Lord, of listening to His life, so please tell me about such as, He who saved Gokula from the torrential rain of Indra. Tell me about Him who transformed a dwarf into a beautiful woman, and who is the essence of Bṛndāvana (24).

In the verses quoted above, in one way or an other, Kanakadāsa has tried to recount the childhood life of Lord Kṛṣṇa which indicates that, though he was dealing with a different theme, he was still dwelling on Bālakṛṣṇa and his exploits. Though the exploits are recounted as attached with divinity, one can sense the diminishing gap between the devotee and the God whom he contemplates.

The composition progresses to where Kṛṣṇa had to come .

20) R.C. Hiremaṭha, ed., Kanakadāsara Mohanatarangiṇi, XXXII-1

21) R.C. Hiremaṭha, ed., Kanakadāsara Mohanatarangiṇi, XXXIII-1

22) See page 68 of the present thesis and foot note No.48.

23) R.C. Hiremaṭha, ed., Kanakadāsara Mohanatarangiṇi, XXXIV-1

24) R.C. Hiremaṭha, ed., Kanakadāsara Mohanatarangiṇi, XXXVI-1
XXXX-1

and rescue his grandson from Bāṇāsura. At this juncture it is clear to the reader that Kanakadāsa has achieved a rare distinction of being a reformer of repute in bringing Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism together. Śiva is there on one side to save his devotee Bāṇāsura and Viṣṇu on the other side to defend his grandson. When the fighting reaches its climax Śiva realises that he should intervene to save his devotee. He comes to Kṛṣṇa speaking for his devotee. He says 'without realising the fact that you are the supreme self in human form this demon has begun this fight. Please leave him to me and I will see that he learns his lesson (25).

Kṛṣṇa answered, 'If you want it like that, so be it. I won't kill this son of Bali' (26). Then Śiva touches Bāṇa who was mortally wounded and Bāṇa at once feels completely cured. He was now ashamed for what he did. To him Śiva speaks thus, 'Anyone who shows hatred either towards me or Lord Hari, would incur sin' (27). Bāṇāsura convinced by Śiva's words addresses Kṛṣṇa 'O Lord when Parameśa himself tells me that there is no difference between him and you, my mind is free from dirt. I will be pleased to give my daughter in marriage to your grandson (28).

Kanakadāsa has tried to adhere rigidly to the prevailing rules of prosody and has brought different kinds of descriptions in an orthodox way. The work, thus, as a whole, has lost its charm. It was not written with the common folk in mind and hence simplicity is also missing. In spite of its being a literary composition it has certain very good aspects of Kṛṣṇa Bhakti which even the common people can cherish. With the verse that tells about Bhakti this discussion regarding Mohanataranginī may be concluded.

25), 26), and 27): R.C. Hiremaṭha, ed., Kanakadāsara Mohanataranginī, XXXX-83,84,85 and 86.

28) R.C. Hiremaṭha, ed., Kanakadāsara Mohanataranginī, XXXX-92.

"Blessed are those eyes which see Him. The tongue that sings and praises His glory gets purified and sanctified. Indeed! gone are the sins heard afore of those who now listen to His life and deeds." (29).

Kanakadāsa's Bālakṛṣṇa songs.

One of the important aspects of divergence between works like the Bhāgavata and the verses of Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa is the elaboration of events in the life of the child Kṛṣṇa which are sung by the dāsas against a passing reference to the baby Kṛṣṇa's pranks in the former books. The pulse of people's response has been rightly gauged by the mendicant minstrels (Haridāsas) of Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa's life and times. Thus instead of creating only a mood of sombre dignity, an aura of ease and intimacy steps in. The churning of this one idea of babyhood pranks has verily brought out the best-ever butter that people can savour. Here are a few songs by Kanakadāsa on Bālakṛṣṇa.

- A) Please tolerate the mistakes made by Kṛṣṇa today.
Henceforth, he will not come to your house.

Does the child know that to take a little butter
is stealing?
How could you tie his beautiful feet?
Why do you frighten my boy of innumerable glories?
Could you not treat him like your own son?

Instead of fondling the small child when you see
him, you complain;
And tie him up saying that he is a liar and a thief!
Am I the only woman in this world who has a child?
Could you not treat him as you would treat your own child?

I have indeed told him, many times, not to join
the group of bad children but he listens not.

I will give him the butter kept in the suspended pot
Please let Ādikeśava go. (30)

Kṛṣṇa's mother Yaśodā defends her son though he has done several mischievous deeds. Particularly compelling is the way in which she addresses the gopis of the village. Poor Kṛṣṇa has been tied by his feet, for he has stolen some butter. Perhaps the mother has started searching for him when he did not come for a long time and finds him tied by the gopis. How clever she is in her argument! She is fully aware that her boy is at fault. However she cunningly turns the tables in holding the gopis at fault for persecuting a small child. "Can you not see, he is only a little child - he does not know what he is doing - just for the sake of 'a little bit of butter' (31) how can you tie the beautiful feet of my boy of innumerable glories!" Thus, defending her son Yaśodā actually persuades the gopis to release him. Little Kṛṣṇa must have been watching all this with a mischievous smile on his face thus creating joy to one and all.

B) Kṛṣṇa has, as usual, carried away his mischievous deeds in the houses of the gopis and they have caught hold of him and parading him in front of Yaśodā spoke thus:

Gathering together, all the Gopis,
Holding Kṛṣṇa's hand,

Hurriedly came to Yaśodā
And complained against him;

(Then runs the dialogue).

Gopis: A great thief is your son. Impudently-
He stole nearly all the butter,
Without (using) the ladder for the beams,
He drinks milk and curds from the hanging pots;

30) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Bēṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds., Śrī Kanakadāsara Hādugaḷu, song 105.

31) A.A. Milne - When we were very young, the King's breakfast. p.58

Kṛṣṇa: No mother, It wasn't I,
These Gopis blame me for nothing!
To open the sealed mouth of the pots
(locked doors of the shelves)
Am I such a big giant?

G: Ha! He looks innocent! Yet,
While I was churning the curds,
He came quietly, embraced me and
Held my heaving breasts!

K: I tell you, listen to me mother!
This woman is as tall as a ghost!
As a small boy, can I jump to that height
Just for that hanging skin (i.e. her breasts)?

G: When my children are asleep and
When I had gone for water with my pot
He smeared their mouths with curds;
Is this thievery of his any good?

K: This is not a woman but a sinner; her
Children are not fed their stomach's fill
Those children will not leave even fruit alone!
Will they spare me this butter, O mother?

G: When I was fast asleep on my bed, he
Brought a live serpent and
Placing at my side without my knowledge
Never waited, but ran away!

K: To hold a terrifying serpent in my hand -
Am I a snake charmer?
For she failed to fulfil the vow she took,
The snake might have come to remind her!

Yaśodā : O you who have children,
Is it right on your part to accuse my Kṛṣṇa of theft?
If you bring the proof of his theft
I will teach him a real lesson!

G: Your son is so small and
Your son is so clever!

He is none other than Ādikeśava of Kāginēlē
Who showed us his māyā form! (32)

Gopis have brought Kṛṣṇa to have him punished by his mother Yaśodā for his knavery. They had noted down all the perfidious acts Kṛṣṇa did and narrated them one by one to Yaśodā.

They told her that Kṛṣṇa drank all the milk and curds kept in pots hanging high above and stole butter. Kṛṣṇa cleverly rejects that by saying "how can I, a small boy, reach that high?".

Their second complaint that Kṛṣṇa embraced one of them and touched her breasts was also easily countered by Kṛṣṇa.

That Kṛṣṇa smeared the residue of butter he ate on the mouths of their children and ran away, was their next complaint. Intelligent Kṛṣṇa pushed aside even that by saying that the children of those gopis were not well fed by their mothers and so they have eaten all the butter. The poor gopis though they saw Kṛṣṇa doing all these things could not prove them at all.

Lastly, they expressed their anger that Kṛṣṇa put a live snake where one of the gopis was fast asleep. Kṛṣṇa who had expected all this, was ready with an appropriate answer (33).

Perhaps, Yaśodā had thought that she had to punish her little son in order to satisfy the gopis, for she had been listening to their complaints time and again (though she had no mind to punish him).

32) Kṛṣṇaśarmā Beṭageri, Huccarāva Bengeri, eds., Śrī Kanakadāsara Hādugaḷu, song 103.

33) In India, especially in the South, people have great faith in serpents and they treat them as gods, quite often they wish for something and take a vow that if their wish is fulfilled they would do a pūjā to the snake or they would perform some religious deed or the like. It is a belief that if a person failed to carry out his vow when his desires were fulfilled the snake would appear before him in person or in his dreams to remind him of his vow. In this song we can see how a traditional religious belief has crept in.

Now she was enchanted when she heard the skilful answers of her loving son. She saw that the gopis were silenced as they had no proof to show her. So she could easily side with Kṛṣṇa and defend him. Poor gopis, though they were troubled by him, had to retreat praising his cleverness.

The poem necessarily takes the form of a dialogue which is one of the specialities of the Haridāśas. Here we have accusations, defence and support to ^{the} defence. Finally the losers retreat. This is a poem which is very much alive and refreshing. This conversation which has been expressed in simple and suitable words is the point which attracts the reader.

Here the supernatural element is excellently brought in along with Kṛṣṇa's ḅālabhāva (childish pranks). Kanakadāsa has adduced here and there philosophical ideas as well (34).

The third verse is a fine example of Yoga-Bhoga Samanvaya, i.e. a fine blending of yoga and love. The words expressed convey the feeling of sensuality, yet the inner meaning reveals Kṛṣṇa's lack of interest in sensual pleasure (35). After all, only a yogi can have such disinterestedness to worldly pleasures.

Kṛṣṇa was tiny and wily enough to slip through their fingers: aṇumaya rūpā kāṇē; 'as small as an atom'. This reiterates the line from the Kāthopanīṣat. aṇoraṇīyān mahato mahīyān(36) 'smaller than the smallest and greater than the greatest'.

34) It is a known fact that children do not like to take pills or tablets. So their elders have a plan. They mix honey or some sweet juice with them and feed them to their children. Now the tablet is easily swallowed. Similarly we are all children as far as philosophical ideas are concerned. So instead of pouring them to one's mind directly the dāśas have mixed them with the honey of sensuality and have them served up to us.

35) This may reveal the lack interest of Kanakadāsa the poet devotee towards worldly pleasures.

36) K.U. II-20

C) Gopi come and see for yourself

The trouble your son is causing.

He comes to the houses of all of us,

And commits innumerable pranks.

Why should he come and behave like this,

With women who are all married?

How can we come and tell you the lot

The way he emb^ar^rasses us all!

He does not let go of our sari-end

O what shall I do with him?

We cannot tolerate any more and

His harrassment has gone beyond limits.

Listen to the annoyance caused by your son

Cannigarāya, the Lord Kadali-Ranga

The only way left for us at present is

To leave our husbands and go. (37)

This is another song on the theme of Kṛṣṇa harassing the gopis. The manner he behaved with the gopis was in no way worthy of a boy of his age the gopis felt, and were naturally annoyed. Still the way their complaints are recorded here indicate that though there was a tinge of pain in their words there was also joy and love of a mother concealed in those words. Kannada words like lūṭi, ceṣṭe and hāvaḷi (38), help the singer or the reader to identify the boy as the little thief and lastly the word Kadali-Ranga, 'Ranga (a familiar name for little Kṛṣṇa) who likes bananas' brings home the intended idea of the devotee. The construction of the song suits a familiar tune which could be represented by the following

schema:

Nāna, Nāna, Nāna, Nanna,	/	Nanana	Nānanā
Nāna, Nāna, Nāna, Nanna,	/	Nanana	Nānanā

37) B. Śivamūrti Śāstri, K.M. Kṛṣṇarāv, eds., Kanakadāsara Kīrtanēgaḷu, song 149.

38) Loot, mischief and harassment.

The apparent inconsistency of some of the lines in the song, gives full liberty to the singer to balance it with the familiar tune and thus helps to enhance the beauty of the song. This eventually results in bringing little Kṛṣṇa closer to one and all.

- D) Kṛṣṇa, the champion of the Yādavas, when you were playing on your flute in Br̥ndāvana;
Rādhā (39) and other Gopis were serving you, O Madhusūdana.

Now blowing upon the flute held in your hand,
Now singing to the tunes of sa ri ga ma pa dha, are you;
Gods have assembled in the sky and
The celestial nymphs have become entranced;

Playing various ragas in different styles,
You followed the cows and sang.
Hara and Brahma were greatly delighted and
Tumburu and Nārada were singing happily.

Caressing the cows in different ways,
By patting their heads with both your hands, are you,
O such you are, Lord Ādikeśava of the lotus eyes,
As you look after the calves along with the cows!" (40)

The song reveals how Kṛṣṇa had attracted everybody, even the Gods, by his magic flute and also by his singing. Both music and meaning have blended in a fine way here and Kṛṣṇa has been attributed of musical expertise. Moreover, this is shown in a passage full of allusions to celestial musicians; the Apsaras, the celestial nymphs, Śiva, the Lord of Dance, Brahma, the husband of Sarasvatī, the great divine Vīṇā player, Nārada, the celestial musician and Tumburu, the celestial percussionist.

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- 39) Rādhā is almost unknown to the Haridāsas of Karnataka as the Bhāgavatapurāṇa, which these Haridāsas closely follow, does not give any information regarding Rādhā. Her appearance in Kanakadāsa's song is very strange.
- 40) Subodha M Rāmarāv, ed., Haridāsa Kīrtana Tarangiṇi, Pt.3, song 72.

Summary:

Purandaradāsa was first a devotee and then a poet. But Kanakadāsa was a better poet. Purandaradāsa's songs evidence a sign of effortlessness and simplicity which is not so common in Kanakadāsa's songs. The reason is that Kanakadāsa's learning is incorporated in voluminous works like Mohanatarangiṇī and Nalacaritrē where attention to more grammatical details was needed to maintain the purity and clarity of the work as a unit. Still the devotee in him is not lost merely because the author in him becomes predominant. Kanakadāsa has also been able to transcend all known limits of human prejudices and retain the supremacy of devotion. The few songs studied here are a proof to this. Kanakadāsa as a devotee and as a poet is not fully revealed in the present work because only his Bālakṛṣṇa songs are selected which are very few in number. An examination of his compositions on other themes of life will certainly show his capacity as a poet and a devotee of a great order, surpassing even Purandaradāsa in several occasions.

METRE AND RHYTHM IN THE COMPOSITIONS OF HARIDĀSAS.

The compositions of the Haridāśas especially of Purandaradāśa and Kanakadāśa have to be examined with regard to their metres, to assess their success in propagating Kṛṣṇabhakti and other self-appointed tasks. The form of songs and their melodic effects account, to a great extent, for the popularity of the subject. By the time Purandaradāśa and Kanakadāśa appeared on the scene Kannadametre had developed to a significant extent.

The metre known as chandas in Kannada is of two kinds.(1)

(a) The Mātrā-metre and (b) The Aṁśa-metre. The first one deals with the exact value of each syllable whereas the second is flexible as far as these are concerned. Purandaradāśa, Kanakadāśa and other Haridāśas made use of these two, and their combinations, revealing the wide range of possibilities and succeeded to a very great extent in their endeavour.

The Aṁśa-metre: The Aṁśa-metre is made of different gaṇas, 'syllable foot', viz., (a) Brahma (b) Viṣṇu and (c) Rudra. In this metre each syllable is counted as an aṁśa, a part, irrespective of it being short or long. Thus Brahmagāṇa is made of two aṁśas, Viṣṇugāṇa three aṁśas and Rudragāṇa has four aṁśas. One more important thing to be noted is that in each of these gaṇas the first aṁśa should be either two laghus, 'time taken to pronounce a short vowel', or one guru, 'two times the laghu', and thereafter each letter is counted as one aṁśa. Below is given an example of Purandaradāśa's Bālakṛṣṇa song.

1) There is another metre called Akṣara-metre which is considered these days somewhat artificial.

Abbreviation: B- Brahmagāṇa,
V- Viṣṇugāṇa
R- Rudragāṇa.

(B)	(V)	(V)	(B)	
i va.na.	/	pi ḍu.kõṇ.ḍu.	/	po.gě.lõ. / jo.gi /
				<u>Pallavi</u>
(V)	(V)	(V)	(B)	
i va.na. mma	/	mā.ta.ke. /	ḷadě.pun.ḍa. /	nā.da. /
<hr/>				
(V)	(V)	(V)	(V)	
ā.ḍu.tā.	/	ḍu.ta.po.gi. /	nī.ro.ḷu /	muḷu.gi.da./
(V)	(V)	(V)	(B)	
be.ḍa.vēn.	/	daru.bě.ṭṭa. /	bě.nna.li. /	hõ.ṭṭa /
(V)	(V)	(V)	(V)	<u>Carāṇa</u>
dā.ḍe.ya.	/	me.lě.tā./	dhā.ri.ṇi. /	něga.hi.da. /
(V)	(R)	(B)	(B)	
no.ḍi.da.	/	vari.gě.bā.ya. /	těřě.dan. /	jisi.da. /

The dot in each gāṇa indicates one aṃśa.

In the song, as shown above both in Pallavi ^{the} beginning couplet and carāṇa, the verse, except the first line all lines start with a Viṣṇugāṇa. People may wonder why. This inconsistency arises only when it is written down. But when the same is sung the singer would always level this so-called inconsistency by adjusting the aṃśa in the first gāṇa of the first line of the pallavi. Thus the word i va.na. of Brahmagāṇa becomes probably i va.na.a. making it a Viṣṇugāṇa. The same could be said of the Rudragāṇa and Brahmagāṇa found in the last line of the verse (the second and third respectively in that line). These should correspond to the Viṣṇugāṇa of the second line of the verse. In order to do this the Rudragāṇa has to be condensed and the Brahmagāṇa has to be lengthened.

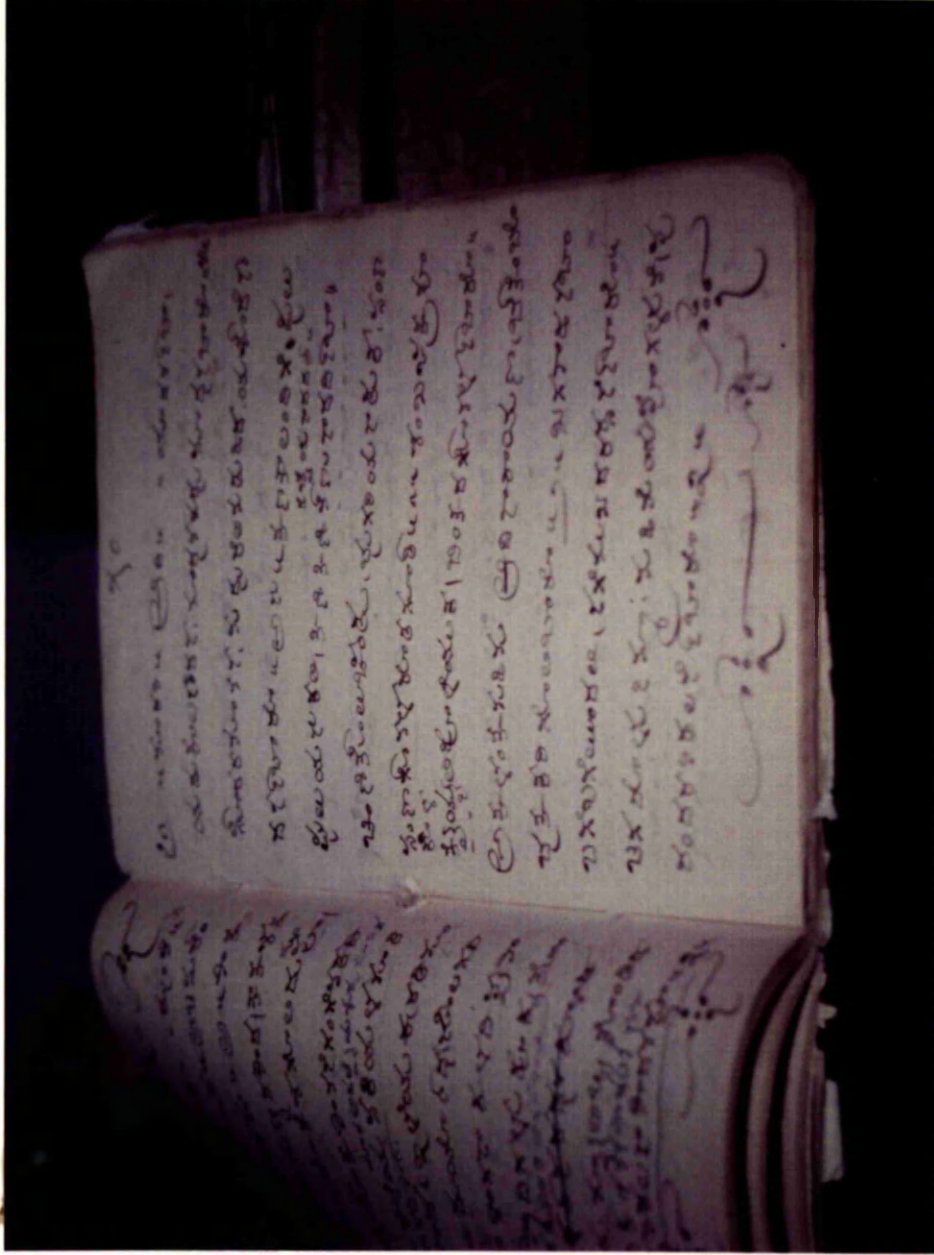
Now the Mātrā-metre could be examined. In this metre the value of each syllable is taken into account. Thus laghu is

represented as one matra, and guru as two matras. In the Mātrā-metre each gaṇa may consist of 3, 4, 5 or more mātrās. Given below is an example.

4	4	4	4	
yā da va	/ nī bā	/ ya du ku la	/ nan da na	/
4	4	4	(G)	<u>Pallavi</u>
mā dha va	/ ma dhu sū	/ da na bā	/ ro	
<hr/>				
4	4	4	4	
so da ra	/ mā va na	/ ma dhu rē li	/ ma ḍu hi da	
4	4	4	(G)	<u>Anupallavi</u>
ya śo dē	/ nan da na	/ nī bā	/ ro	
<hr/>				
4	4	4	4	
ka ṇa kā	/ lan du gē	/ gha lu gha lu	/ re nu ta li	/
4	3	4	(G)	
jha ṇa jha ṇa	/ ve ṇu	/ nā da da	/ lī	
4	3	4	4	<u>Caraṇa</u>
ci ṇi kol	/ cēn ḍu	/ bu gu ri ya	/ nā ḍu ta	/
6	4	4	(G)	
sa ṇa sa ṇa	/ go va la	/ rō ḍa gū	/ ḍi	

This song mostly consists of gaṇas in four mātrās with a guru at the end of every alternate line. This pattern of construction is called mandānilalaya, 'the rhythm of the cool breeze'. One finds that in the 2nd, 3rd and 4th line of the verse there are some gaṇas with less or more number of mātrās. This again as seen earlier is left to the singer to adjust and make it sound like the other lines of the song. Thus the word ve ṇu becomes ve nū, cēn ḍu becomes cēn dū, and sa ṇa sa ṇa becomes sa ṇa sa ṇa.

Unlike the aṃśa-metre, in the mātrā-metre the poet is not supposed to take much liberty. Still the Haridāsas seem to have ignored this point to a certain extent as they experimented with both these metres and also a combination of these two. This



Another handwritten manuscript showing the song
'Come O Yādava', yādava
nī bā, by Purandaradāsa.

(Courtesy: Institute of
Kannada Studies, Mysore
University, Mysore)

adoptive method of singing has its special effect as there is more liberty to the singer.

Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa even sang in the different divisions of the above said metres such as Tripadi, Ṣatpadi and the like. Poets like Pampa, Ranna and Rudrabhaṭṭa chose the 'campū' style for their compositions. Kumāravāsa chose the Bhāminīṣatpadi and certain others selected the Sāngatya style. As they restricted themselves to these particular metres variety in their composition was limited. The Haridāsas cleverly selected the more flexible metres and a combination of these, thus had an unlimited scope for expression.

Rhythmic patterns:

There are seven main types of Talas, rhythmic patterns in Karnatic music (2). Purandaradāsa's and Kanakadāsa's songs easily adapt over the entire range offered by these rhythms. As has been seen already Purandaradāsa and other Haridāsas have even composed a particular group of songs called Sulādis. These Sulādis are appropriately termed Tālamālikās, 'garland of rhythms' like the Rāgamālikā songs which adopt a succession of different melodies. These Sulādis consist of 5, 6 or sometimes even 7 short appendages each of which is sung to different rhythmic patterns. A Sulādi ends with a jate ^{or} couplet.

2) Dhruva, Maṭhya, Tripuṭa, Jhampa, Aṭṭa, Eka and Ādi-tālas.

14. LATER HARIDĀSAS.

Mahipatidāsa is known to have lived in the 17th century (approximately between 1610 - 1681 A.D.). He was a contemporary of the Adilshah of Bijapur of the 17th.C. A.D. His songs evidence the philosophical outlook of the dāsas towards the world. His compositions have been a recent addition to the Haridāsa literature. As such his name was not well-known before. There are very few Bālakṛṣṇa songs composed by this minstrel, one of which is quoted here:

What a boy is yours, Gopamma!

He knows what is tasty and is a butter thief,
In he comes with watchful eyes, a paramour
who loves other's wives.

He pulls out my upper garment on streets and roads as well.
He does not leave me alone, when he smells my moves!

To catch him red-handed, I am unable; he quickly slips away.
He is smart, though he does certain things, he puts on an
innocent face.

To whom we shall report all this, the complaints against him.
Please you yourself try to realise the things about your son.

He does not desert the hands of those who hold on to him.
He it is who is looking after the ignorant Mahipati. (1)

In such a composition containing five little couplets the devotee has brought^t out the mischievous nature of little Kṛṣṇa and his relationship with the gopis.

Vijayadāsa.

Approximately in between 1678 and 1755 A.D. Vijayadāsa lived. It is understood from one of his songs that he was initiated to the Haridāsa status by Purandaradāsa who appeared in his dreams.

Vijayadāsa directly offers his obeisance to Purandaradāsa which in

1) G.Varadarajarav, ed., Mahipatirāyara Kṛtigalu, song 108

itself is a sign of Purandara's influence on him. Very few Bālakṛṣṇa songs are available which are composed by Vijayadāsa. Here is one which is quite attractive and, which appears to be a little different from the repetitive ideas of many of the post Purandaradāsa Bālakṛṣṇa compositions.

I am carrying curds, Ranga please let me pass,
Do not hinder me on my way and do move aside.

You eh! Cowherd, don't call me by my name,
Please keep away or my pearl necklace will break,
It is not even dark and why don't you understand,
Does any one submit to the other if there is no
love in-between.

Do not touch my breast eh you, do not show that wily smile,
Why do you hold me by my waist like this?
By closing doors should you make such nonsense,
Why this love when I must go to my house.

I don't know what they thought of us those who were
behind us,
Not a bit of decent behaviour I find in you, charmless one,
You, Vijayaviṭhala who surpasses the brightness of
thousands of suns,
Please come to my house and I will satisfy your heart's
desire! (2)

Kṛṣṇa's liking for curds, milk and butter as well as his love for the gopis is yet again the theme of a song. The picture of Kṛṣṇa that emerges through this song equals the naughty Kṛṣṇa of Purandaradāsa, Kanakadāsa and other Haridāśas. The well-rehearsed material of the Bhāgavata which has been accepted by the mass, does not allow the mind to think otherwise of Kṛṣṇa's actions such as touching the gopis' breasts; pulling their necklaces and inviting them for love. It indeed gradually, but firmly, leads one further into the human yet divine play of Kṛṣṇa and its universality.

Prasannavenkaṭadāsa.

He lived between the later part of 17th and earlier part of the 18th.C. A.D. Among the later Haridāsas, in the songs of Prasannavenkaṭadāsa, one finds more originality than others. Some times while reading his songs one might even think that one is reading a Purandaradāsa composition. This is in a way a credit to Prasannavenkaṭadāsa and it also shows how he was unable to escape the influence of Purandaradāsa. Here are a few examples from his songs on Bālakṛṣṇa.

Come dear Kṛṣṇa, come my little Rangamma (3)
Come my darling and give me a kiss.

O my little father, the father of Brahma,
O the most intelligent one, come, have butter.

Come my son, O eternal bliss,
O you the Gods' object of worship, my little Mukunda come.

Come on my love, O the lotus-eyed one,
Come my darling, the best among children.

Come playing, please, O ocean of compassion,
You are tired after playing, please,
as I call you, come with love.

Come O lord of wealth, come my little one,
Come O ever joyful, my Prasannavenkaṭeśa, please come (4)

A very attractive way of calling a male child with a feminine suffix added to its name can be seen here. Such a calling brings out

3) In ancient Kannada literature amma (mother) ^{also} meant father. But gradually this kind of usage started degenerating. The names Allama and Ēccama may be examined as having a feminine suffix at the end though they are the names of (a) a great Śivabhakta (b) a great ruler. Kannada usage of words like amma and Rangamma are similar to the above names. Such an ending, specially in the case of little ones evokes a feeling of intimacy.

4) Kāvya-premi, ed., Prasannavenkaṭadāsara Hādugaḷu, p.36.

the deep affection of the caller and at the same time creates love in the hearts of the listeners and readers.

You are too fond of your son, Gopi,
So you pay no attention to our words.

Don't tell that he does not ask for butter and the like
See his little mouth, full of stolen butter,
If your son was really a little boy (as you say)
Should he play with others' grown-up daughters?

Don't defend yourself by saying he is little Kiṭṭa (5)
He embarrasses us in front of others,
He does not fear us even if we get angry
Your son is too obstinate - he does not care.

(Still, we know that) We should never call him a small
child and the like,
O when shall he come and free us from worldliness,
He is the lord of those who remember him in dejection or
otherwise,
He is Ranga the Lord of Lakṣmī, Prasannavenkaṭeśa. (6)

This echoes similar ideas from Purandaradāsa's songs. Yaśodā as usual does not admit her son is blameworthy, but there is visual proof that he has created trouble in the houses of the gopis. The gopis' enjoyment is also in complaining, not in getting him punished, a strange relationship indeed!

Jagannāthadāsa (1728 - 1809 A.D.).

Jagannāthadāsa was different from other Haridāsas in that he was a scholar in Sanskrit who has contributed a few compositions in Sanskrit. Somewhere in the midway of his life he took to writing in Kannada as well. It is a well known fact that all over Karnataka that Vijayadāsa converted Jagannāthadāsa from an arrogant Sanskrit

5) Kiṭṭa is a corrupt form of Kṛṣṇa in Kannada mainly used to call little ones which arouses a kind of paternal feeling when sung or heard or read.

6) Kāvya-premī, ed., Prasannavenkaṭadāsara Hāḍugaḷu, p.32 and 33.
verses 1,2 and 5.

scholar to a humble Haridāsa. Along with his compositions on Dvaita philosophy and certain songs on other topics such as the place of Bhakti and Morality in one's life Jagannathadāsa's talent has been reflected in his work Harikathāmṛtasāra, which runs in a similar vein as that of Kanakadāsa's Haribhaktisāra. The influence of Sanskrit, which was his favourite subject before he joined the line of the Haridasas is apparent in his songs.

'Who is the charioteer who ascended the chariot my friend .!(7) thus a song commences and continues. The song gives an impression that the devotee is going to sing the plight of the gopis when Kṛṣṇa left for Mathurā. But suddenly it becomes more of a Sanskrit composition than a Kannada one. Towards the end again it appears that there is a sparkle of young Kṛṣṇa when the Gopis sing 'Jagannāthaviṭhala who removed our fears, why is he not coming back O friend'. Suddenly that also diminishes when they utter 'he came down to the earth to fulfill the desires of people', thus blurring the image of Bālakṛṣṇa.

In another song Jagannāthadāsa sings:

I am blessed having seen Viṭhala, I am blessed,
I am indeed blessed, having seen the beautiful
form of the father of cupid,

Who is best among gods, who is joy personified,
Who wanders in Vṛndāvana and having seen such a cowherd
I am really blessed.

Whose body is auspicious, who broke the pride of Kāṇḍīya,
Who blessed an Elephant and, having seen such Ranga I
am blessed.

He who killed his uncle, he who is the father of Brahma,
Looking at him, the famous Jagannāthaviṭhala, I am blessed. (8)

In the above song, there are a few references that give an

7) Kāvyaapremi, ed., Jagannāthadāsara Hāḍugaḷu, p.44-45

8) Kāvyaapremi, ed., Jagannāthadāsara Hāḍugaḷu, p.23-24

impression of Jagannathadāsa's child Kṛṣṇa. The expressions like vr̥ndāvana sancāra (he who wanders in the Vṛndāvana grove), gopa (a cowherd) and Ranga a Kannada folk word for Kṛṣṇa will create, at least for a moment, a kind of affectionate feeling towards little Kṛṣṇa.

Summary.

These Haridāśas mentioned earlier in this chapter are the important few among the post-Purandaradāsa - Kanakadāsa Haridāśas. In the songs of these later Haridāśas it is apparent that they were gradually moving away from the heart and unfortunately they became more interested in prosody and alliterations which was not strictly followed by the older Haridāśas, like Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa (9). At the same time, the material becomes so repetitive that one hardly finds these songs sung in Kannada households. Purandaradāsa in particular and Kanakadāsa, to a certain extent, have exhausted children's literature with respect to Kṛṣṇa, and even earlier, there were such songs from Śrīpādarāja, Vyāsarāja and Vādirāja, so the later Haridāśas were unable to escape from this great flood. Thus they have shown very little originality in their Bālakṛṣṇa compositions. Perhaps, only Prasannavenkaṭadāsa and Vijayadāsa to a certain extent, stand apart in places, even almost equalling Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa.

It is no wonder that when one reads through the Bālakṛṣṇa songs of the post-Purandaradāsa/Kanakadāsa Haridāsa literature, one feels familiar with the ideas expressed in those songs. This may in itself explain why only the songs of Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa are well-known among the people of Karnataka.

9) This refers only to their short compositions.

15. CONCLUSION.

In this concluding chapter an attempt has been made to discuss all the images under which little Kṛṣṇa has been sung by the Haridāśas of Karnataka.

A) Around the 16th and 17th.C. A.D. there were very few poets and devotees who dealt with children in their literature in Kannada. Child characters were not very prevalent in their works. So such a literature (this may be literature concerning children and their psychology by the elders, or literature for children by the elders) had not developed properly as far as the Kannada language was concerned. This gap was successfully bridged by Purandaradāsa and his chosen character, little Kṛṣṇa. There were poets and devotees who have treated young characters eg., the Pāṇḍavas in the Kumāravyāsa Bhārata, Kṛṣṇa of Rudrabhaṭṭa's Jagannāthavijaya, Babhruvāhana and Candrahāsa of Lakṣmīśa's Jaiminī-Bhārata, Lohitāśva of Rāghavāṅka's Hariścandrakāvya. But in all these except for Rudrabhaṭṭa's composition child characters do not play a major role. Rudrabhaṭṭa treats the child Kṛṣṇa in a somewhat elaborate manner but his work is enjoyed by very few scholars. Śrī Śrīpādarāja and Vyāsarāja of the Dvaita school succeed to a certain extent in making Kṛṣṇa the child hero among commoners. But it is Purandaradāsa who scored over others in this regard by his wonderful songs on little Kṛṣṇa which reflect closely the psychological aspect of a child unsung before.

In Kannada literature wherever one finds a treatment of a child character it could be said that it invariably draws its inspiration from the child Kṛṣṇa of the Purāṇas, particularly the Bhāgavatapurāṇa. Of all the Epic and Purāṇic characters it is only Kṛṣṇa who attracted people who were attached to samsāra as well as those who were detached from it i.e., the yogins. But Kṛṣṇa and only Kṛṣṇa was a perfect combination of Yoga and Bhoga

(spirituality and enjoyment). This diverse personality of Kṛṣṇa has influenced many sectarian and religious movements that prevailed in India. Consider for example, the Bharateśavaibhava of Ratnākaravarṇi: in this Jaina literary work, the character of Bharateśa clearly shows how Kṛṣṇa has influenced him. Generally the Jains are of the opinion that Yoga is most important in life. But to preach this to the masses was not simple. In order to attract them, Jains needed some Bhoga (aspect of enjoyment). The result is the work Bharateśavaibhava which combines Bhoga with Yoga. The same could be said about the character of Prabhudeva of Prabhulingalīlē, a Vīraśaiva composition by the poet Cāmarasa.

B) Vīraśaivas and the Haridāsas.

As has been mentioned earlier, two reformative movements have influenced the life of the people to a great extent in Karnataka. One is the Vīraśaiva movement and the other the Haridāsa movement. In general both established themselves in order to educate the common people; this was one among their self-imposed tasks. They brought home to the masses the more difficult ideas of the Vedas, the Upaniṣads, the Epics and the Purāṇas in a simple day-to-day language. This has influenced the present day literature to a great extent in its style and simplicity. Even today their sayings and songs are as new as they were when these people lived. Among these the Haridāsas could be termed the beginners of modern Kannada poetry. These two movements yet stand apart in their approaches.

The Vedas were in the hands of high-class brahmins and they were beyond the reach of common people. People other than the Brahmins were restricted from Vedic recitations and even from listening to them. The Vīraśaiva's opposed these taboos. Several portions of the Vedas which deal with sacrifices and rituals were not accepted by them. The Vīraśaivas also disregarded the caste

system and framed their own code of conduct on the basis of Śivāgamas as opposed to the Vedas and their teachings. Thus, though this group attracted a large number of common people to join their movement, it did not satisfy many others who were conscious about their caste and who regarded the Vedic sayings as sacred. Although the Vīraśaivas prime principle - 'Bhakti alone is important', was liked by the orthodox society, they did not approve ^{of} their other practices (1).

The Haridāsas came on the scene a little later than the Vīraśaivas. They emerged as a religious group that upheld the teachings of the Vedas, Epics and the Purāṇas. They were also reformers like the Vīraśaivas but they did not severely criticise the ancient literature and their teachings. They respected the Vedas and the Upaniṣads and the caste system. Being Vaiṣṇavas, they revived Kṛṣṇabhakti and also Sanātana Dharma which faced some difficulty during the time of the Vīraśaivas and later faced trouble by the Muslim invaders. At the same time they did not forget to criticise the unhealthy practices of society, many of which were supposed to have originated from the Vedas, Upaniṣads, Epics and Purāṇas. Finally, one of the main self-appointed principles of these Haridāsas was to make the Lord (Hari) easily approachable to one and all. Who else other than a child could be so easily approached? Hence most of their songs on Kṛṣṇa run around his childhood and boyhood incidents.

C) Udupi Kṛṣṇa, one of the renowned forms of Bālakṛṣṇa, was for Purandaradāsa, Kanakadāsa and other Haridāsas of special significance, for he is said to have been brought from Dvārakā which is Kṛṣṇa's abode on earth; and was installed at Udupi by none other than the great Madhvācārya, the leader and guru of the Dvaita movement. He it was who most inspired his followers of whom Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa

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- 1) The Vīraśaivas who opposed the caste system at last ended by framing a caste of their own which is known by the name 'Vīraśaiva' or the 'Lingāyata' and this was not the idea of the great reformist, devotee Basavaṇṇa.

were well known. Udupi Kṛṣṇa was also worshipped by Purandaradāsa's Master Śrī Vyāsarāya. Added to this, Kṛṣṇa as a boy as depicted in the Harivaṁśa, Viṣṇupurāṇa and Bhāgavatapurāṇa represents the essence of love, beauty and supreme joy. Purandaradāsa could not escape from such a stupendous attraction. The result is his many wonderful songs on Kṛṣṇa's childhood.

Sentiments of parental love and those of a lover and a beloved are very close to the human heart, and these are the most natural elements of human life. On the other hand Vairāgya, detachment from worldliness, is difficult to put into practice in one's life. Only a few can realise God's greatness through detachment. But through love, one and all can realise God. An important aspect of Kṛṣṇa's life is that he had the great ability of mixing with all kinds of people and sharing their happiness and sorrows. This very natural human quality with which he is associated brought him much closer to his devotees than by any other form by which God seems to have done.

Purandaradāsa used this aspect of Kṛṣṇa's life and spread Kṛṣṇabhakti among the people of Karnataka. Human beings, by nature, are different from each other in their mentality. Some would like to enjoy the childhood pranks and boyhood plays of Kṛṣṇa. Some find his friendship with the innocent gopis more interesting. Certain others feel for his achievements as a man attached to the world, yet at the same time detached from it, and there are those who would like to know more about him as a great Yogin. Each one of these represents a different state of mind and they need to be fed with their own food, and Purandaradāsa assessed this very well. Though Purandaradāsa's main target was the common folk, his songs have something for all kinds of people. As far as his Kṛṣṇa songs are concerned, they have a meaning at the ordinary level and the self same

songs at times mean much more than their apparent words (2). The very objective of Purandaradāsa was to make the Lord easily approachable and to make social customs and religious practices simpler. Generally, the expressed meaning of the songs is enough for the simple faith of the innocent devotee; to ascribe an inner philosophical symbolism would confuse him.

A thing of beauty either sentimental, lyrical, or musical, is readily appreciated by a broad spectrum of human life. In due course each one attains a state of assimilation when the mind unifies itself with the heart, becomes cultured, reflects on the assimilated meaning in context of his own experience in life and finally emerges to see the truth. If one cannot appreciate the world, god's wonderful creation, of what use is the inner meaning of the words and their philosophical import? Only when one learns to appreciate the external, can one understand the internal (symbolism). Purandaradāsa, Kanakadāsa and others have tried to simplify the complications of the Vedas, the Upaniṣads, the Epics and Purāṇas for they were beyond the understanding of common people. To attach only a philosophical meaning to all the songs would be to stray completely from Purandaradāsa's and other dāsa's intention. At the same time it should not be misunderstood as a denial of the greatness of either of the dāsa's in adopting a philosophical approach to their compositions. Certainly, they are great even without such an approach. The mere joy one experiences as one sings or listens to or reads these compositions certainly excels all other kinds of happiness.

D) The relationship of the gopis with Kṛṣṇa in these songs of the Haridāsa's differs somewhat from that of the Bhāgavata. In the Bhāgavata most of the playing and dancing and conversations of the gopis and Kṛṣṇa take place in the forest, or on the banks of the

2) There are certain songs, the philosophical meanings of which are apparent and which are meant to be philosophical; example kūṣaṇu kaṇḍīrā, RR Divākara, Haribhakti Sudhā, Song 148.

river Yamunā or in the village grove. The sentiment of romance (Madhurabhāva) represented in their relationship has been dealt with in greater detail than that of parental love (Vātaalyabhāva). But in the Kṛṣṇa songs of Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa those using the Vātsalya theme are greater in number, and also in some, where Madhurabhāva does predominate in the final stanza, the Dāsas have made an effort to bring back the song to the theme of Vātsalya (3). Even among the local people in Karnataka these Vātsalya songs are more popular, for, most of the songs they know are those that depict the frolics of child Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇa was passionately loved by the gopis. A study of such songs regarding their relationship would clearly reveal that he was capable of expressing his love for the gopis in a way unmatched by anybody in the world. This becomes evident by the way the gopis respond to the call of Kṛṣṇa or his flute, or their reaction when they failed to find him even for a minute. Like the Bhāgavata and the Viṣṇupurāṇa, Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa and other dāsas also have depicted Kṛṣṇa as a great lover. At times these songs appear to go beyond the limits of propriety and are erotic in their expressions, while it is true that Kṛṣṇa played with the gopis in such a way that perhaps it should not be interpreted in sexual terms, or misunderstood. He who has not yet reached the maturity of mind fails to understand poems in which one or two erotic thoughts have

3) Though it may also be suggested that the vulgarity exists in the minds of interpreters rather than those of the composer themselves. In some places these love songs seem a little improper. Suddenly the dāsa realises that he is going drifting away from propriety and the song takes a lightning turn away from the sensual world to the ocean of parental love where the so-called blemish becomes drowned in the motherly affection and emerges in the form of a purified soul. These last lines many a time divert the attention of readers from impermanent sensual pleasures towards the much-dignified love that eventually ends in devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa; as an example, please see page 184, song A of the present thesis.

appeared. Any such poem, irrespective of the poet is then bound to provoke and arouse erotic feelings in such persons. These erotic terms may have been expressed with philosophical intentions of the soul's union with the Great Soul, or with an intent to show the all-embracing love of such an object, or by using the freedom of affection which the devotee has towards his Lord. But it is human weakness (nature) to stumble on these erotic words and lose the real thread of the song at least for a moment. One can defend Purandaradāsa by expanding Kṛṣṇa's love too far or by using some other tactical arguments. But the fact is, they are not necessary. It is not always good to express everything that comes to one's mind. It merely decreases the effect of the intended theme. These descriptions of Kṛṣṇa's love for the gopis in open terms lets the image of Kṛṣṇa down to a certain extent from the point of the devotees and all those who listen to and read these songs. It may be that Purandaradāsa has expressed these on the lines of the Bhāgavata, where these activities of Kṛṣṇa are described in Sanskrit. Singing Kṛṣṇa's name in all possible ways was probably one of the intentions of Purandaradāsa (4). One should not cultivate the habit of attaching the faith of a gospel to everything great men do. But still, had there been fewer songs of such type Kṛṣṇa might have enjoyed a better reputation in the hearts of his devotees.

Another thought to this could also be added here. The devotee sometimes in his ecstasy tends to attach great spiritual importance even to the meanest of his Lord's actions. This is the difficulty with the devotees who abandon themselves to their emotion(5). Such instances may be ignored. Further, if one remains too detached from human experiences and tends to seek God, such an experience would be

4) nāmānyanantasya yasonkitani, B.H.P. I-4-11

5) C.S. Lewis in Four Loves, p.55 says: "Affection at its best can say whatever affection at its best wishes to say, regardless of the rules that govern public courtesy".

of no practical use to the common people. Only a small proportion of the total population of the world is intellectual and spiritual and might think that emotional involvement obstructs the path of one's achievements. But to ordinary people, no experience is complete without emotional involvement. The glory of their chosen ideals are such that, these would shake the whole of their devotees' beings and take them into a trance. Kṛṣṇa himself says in the Gītā:

ye yathā mām prapadyante tāmstathaiva bhajāmyaham / (6)

"Whichever way people choose to reach me in that alone will I bless them".

These people reach him by their pure devotion. Purandaradāsa, was also a philosopher and at the same time had the experience of emotional fervour towards God during his life as a common man. He did not become a great devotee without passing through these phases. So he rightly prepared the road, burning all the thorns and bad elements upon it and opened it for other followers of Lord Hari. The experiences of a man rather than mere words are always very strong and would lead the followers, as well as others who are around him, to god.

E) Humour: Purandaradāsa had realised the part humour can play in fostering love between the Lord and his devotees. It is also one of the elements that helped Kṛṣṇa to be closely associated with his devotees. Purandaradāsa realised this and picked the relevant moments from Bālakṛṣṇa's life and has effectively succeeded in bringing the innate responses of a clever child to the surrounding circumstances and has brought his Kṛṣṇa a little closer to the human heart. The Bhāgavata and the other Purāṇas do not seem to have succeeded in Karnataka to this extent in their treatment of humour. These humorous touches could be felt in such songs where Kṛṣṇa has acted mischievously, where Yasoda tries to defend her son, where the gopis complain about Kṛṣṇa's knavery and the like. Humour is such

a delicate subject to handle that it needs a lot of experience in life and the success that Purandaradāsa met with in depicting such situations tells of his vast knowledge of child and parent psychology. His humour was sublime. Kanakadāsa has also handled this subject. But as his own nature was of a serious type there are not many examples to quote.

F) Variety: To the author of the Bhāgavata, though, Kṛṣṇa was the supreme deity, while telling about the childhood and boyhood pranks of his, Balarāma has also been given prominence. They are seen together in most of the chapters. But a change that has come out in songs of the dāsas is that Balarama has been relegated to the background. This is evident when one closely examines the Harivaṁśa, Viṣṇupurāṇa and Bhāgavata. In the last text Kṛṣṇa has become more prominent than in the former two.

The author of the Bhāgavata has not gone into the details of each of Kṛṣṇa's pranks in such a manner as have the dāsas. The latter have exploited a mother's love in every possible way. To have given such lively expression to one's feelings is not enough if one had mundane experiences but it seems one should have some mystical experience as well. Purandaradāsa, being a father, used his intimate knowledge of children and mixed it with his mystical experience and the result is seen in his songs. When children cry, the mother should pacify them, when they become a little obstinate, she should know how to get around them, when they are impossible she should be able to control them. Sometimes children expect their parents to watch over them and demand their full attention. Sometimes they want to be left alone. Any hindrance to their free movement will upset them and make them angry. These delicate matters are handled with consummate ease by Purandaradāsa as well as by Kanakadāsa. The fact that Kṛṣṇa is acting as a child brings a smile on every face.

Devotion needs no better expression.

There is a very good reason why people in Karnataka like Purandaradasa and his Kṛṣṇa. Perhaps the author of this thesis may add a note on a personal experience. In common with many other boys I was mischievous, and my mother would use such charming ways of getting around me to make me yield to her: when I protested against an oil-bath she would say that she would give me something special after the bath; if I did not eat for some reason she would pray practically to every deity to take away the evil spirit that was troubling me, and so on. I feel the song sung in relation to Yaśodā and little Kṛṣṇa really concerns me and my mother! Because the songs arouse such personal concern, they have always been of close interest. Similarly others see their own image in Kṛṣṇa and their mother's in Yaśodā. Thus a composition that helps one to identify oneself naturally becomes one of the best-loved.

G) In songs like gummana . karēyadirē, yaśodēye amma a study of the language reveals the devotees' keenness in handling the situation with utmost care. His dear little Lord is very young, an infant, and hence he should speak the language of a little boy. So diving deep into the heart of a child the dāsa has brought out the most appropriate expressions in such words as amma, mammu, mammi, gumma, buckkacci (7) and the like. In the song āḍahodalli (8) where Kṛṣṇa, innocent as he is, asks Yaśodā: "Mother, my friends say you are not my mother, is that true?". There is a typical and straightforward way of a boy's innocent questioning regarding his doubts. Only children can ask or do such things and at the same time be innocent and charming. This opportunity of using different kinds of words to express different moods in characters like Yaśodā, Kṛṣṇa, the gopis and others is possible only in a local spoken language. A language like Sanskrit

7) Meaning - mother, food, milk, bogey-man and an oil bath respectively.

8) See page 172 - 173 of the present thesis.

which has many restrictions with regard to the usage of words lacks this beauty and flexibility. This lack of communication with people of different levels certainly creates a great gap between Sanskrit and a local language eg., Kannada. This is also one of the very reasons why Kṛṣṇa in his local Kannada image is more popular than the Kṛṣṇa of classical works such as the Bhāgavatam.

H) The form of the composition: Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa for their composition selected the already-famous metres (9) plus they also experimented on a combination of these. The speciality of this combination is that it gives full liberty to the singer. Though it follows the pattern of the particular metre, it does not matter at times even if it lacks or exceeds one or two or more syllabi in a gaṇa (10). This lapse could be easily and properly adjusted by the singer by lengthening or shortening at that particular place in the song. In other words, this gives more importance to the oral, singing tradition than the written tradition. After all, they were wandering minstrels and they would sing in front of every house when begging for alms. The apparent inconsistency in some of their songs that one reads today were probably resolved by them and the other singers while singing such songs. When an oral tradition is written down, certain differences remain, yet these differences should not, however, lead one to misjudge the virtuosity of such spontaneous poet-devotees. This is the reason why the songs of Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa appeal more when they are sung than when they are read. Just as elders give margin to the mischievous and naughty behaviour of children, in a combined metre there is a margin for an apparent inconsistency. As mischievous and naughty behaviour can be regarded as the sign of natural beauty among children so these songs, with folk

9) The Aṁśa and Mātrā-metres

10) A syllable foot.

charm and more freedom for the singer, have a profound natural beauty and deep natural quality all their own.

Thus the famous Aṁśa metre which is a folk-metre, and other metres, were very appropriately used by Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa to bring Kṛṣṇa in to the homes of Kannada-folk who welcomed him as one of the family.

Many of Purandaradāsa's Bālakṛṣṇa songs are suitable for interpretation in classical dance styles. Certain of these compositions are sung in a lilting rhythm and are used extensively in dance-performances. Sulādis, that have different tālas in the same song have great scope in the field of dance.

Geyatē is another important aspect of the Haridāsa-compositions, especially of Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa. There are words which by themselves, by their very nature, can create feelings, moods and melodies and this quality is known as geyatē in Kannada. Many of Purandaradāsa's and Kanakadāsa's songs have such a quality. There is not sufficient proof to show how their compositions used to be sung during their days but the fact remains that these songs evoke more response if sung in a folk-style.

V. Raghavan has this to say about some composers among whom Purandaradasa is also one. "When an impossible combination happily comes about they say in Sanskrit that gold has acquired fragrance, hemnaḥ paramāmodaḥ. Gold is great by its own high value; fragrance is something wonderful, but only real flowers have it; flower-like ornaments of gold cannot give forth flowers' fragrance, but if they should, then it is a miracle indeed. This consummation of fragrant gold has indeed been achieved in the creations of some composers like Jayadeva, Purandaradasa, Kṣetrajña and Tyāgarāja" (11).

Purandaradāsa's Bālakṛṣṇa songs are a proof to this.

11) C.Ramanujachari, The Spritual heritage of Tyagaraaja, p.4 of the Introductory thesis by V. Raghavan.

It is a common fact that when a theme is repeated it loses its charm. The uniqueness of Purandaradāsa's compositions lies in the fact that although the same ideas occur in more than one verse many of them still retain their novelty. Some of them may have lost their charm but considering the volume of output of compositions it cannot be denied that the ideas of the devotee have been consolidated.

Gradually the road Purandaradāsa and Kankadāsa opened became a royal path and as such it rapidly spread far and wide. In a way it brought an awareness in the people about their religion and gave them moral strength when Karnataka was under the pressure of other religious movements such as Jainism and Vīraśaivism and later Islam. At the same time Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa literature grew to such an extent that it is now very difficult to separate their work from those of several others who have appended their work under Purandaradāsa, Kanakadāsa and other dāsa's names. This is one of the problems regarding songs of those who emerge as leaders of well-proven paths.

The songs of the later Haridāśas evidence the great influence of Purandaradāsa on them. The impact of a great man's achievement is very significant on those who immediately follow him, and many a time they lose their own identity under the influence of the former, and this is revealed in the songs of the post-Purandaradāsa Haridāśas.

J) With regard to the Bālakṛṣṇa songs, one might notice Purandaradāsa has been much praised and that Kanakadāsa has been mentioned only here and there. The reason is, as far as Kṛṣṇa songs are concerned, Kanakadāsa's contribution is much smaller. But his zest and depth of devotion in the few songs he has sung plus his association with Purandaradāsa was the main reason for selecting a few of his songs on Kṛṣṇa. When songs on themes other than Bālakṛṣṇa

are studied, Kanakadāsa's in several places would score over Purandaradāsa.

In the songs of Kanakadāsa the competitive mentality accelerated by learning and devotion is clear, and in Purandaradāsa, the calm and pure outburst of devotion, full of dedication and experience is obvious. The personality of Kanakadāsa is often present in his compositions. But in Purandaradāsa's works the dāsa effaces himself so completely that readers or singers or audience are able to overlook completely the composer's own personality. Instead their own involvement and identity becomes paramount and an awareness of the character depicted in the song becomes a virtual reality.

Beauty and bliss when experienced in their different aspects will have a sublime effect; the more one tries to explain such an effect the more it remains hidden. This is especially true with respect to Bhakti for it is a mystical communion (12). A devotee whose expression makes even an average person feel at least part of his mind, should be considered a gifted man and Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa were two such poets. They translated the Bhakti which they knew through their conduct and earnest and humble striving in search of the Supreme Lord, into simple and day-to-day spoken Kannada language. Words always fall short in bringing down one's experience for their power is limited. Bhakti, which is unlimited, has been revealed through the limited expressions of Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa's words. This certainly proves their worth among Kṛṣṇa-devotees.

K) In Bālakṛṣṇa's lilas (13) one does not sense that Kṛṣṇa stood apart from the people in that he is the Lord and others are

12) yato vāco nivartante aprāpya manasā saha / Tai.U. II-4-1

"Where words return together with the mind not attaining It".

13) Divine play.

his followers, or he is the ruler and the rest should obey him, or he is of noble birth and he should not mix with others. He knew that he was the son of Devakī and Vāsudeva; he had to spend most of his boyhood days in the company of herdsmen. But all the while he enjoyed his life in the village bringing happiness to one and all. He loved everybody since this was his very nature. He was a child among children, a friend to the cowherd boys, a lover to the gopīs, a dear son to Yaśodā and Nandagopa, the cowherd couple, and to those who knew him he was the Lord incarnate and this must have been the reason why people felt and still feel so close to him. This has been brought out in the songs of Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa. The measure of success of any creation is revealed by the popularity it enjoys. In this context the Bālakṛṣṇa compositions of Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa are themselves the very proof of their success.

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